

THE
Praise and Dispraise
OF WOMEN

Gathered out of sundry
thors, as wel Sacred as Profane
with plentie of wonderfull ex-
ples, whereoff some are new
and neuer heard off before,
as by the principall
notes in the Marge-
rent may ap-
peare.

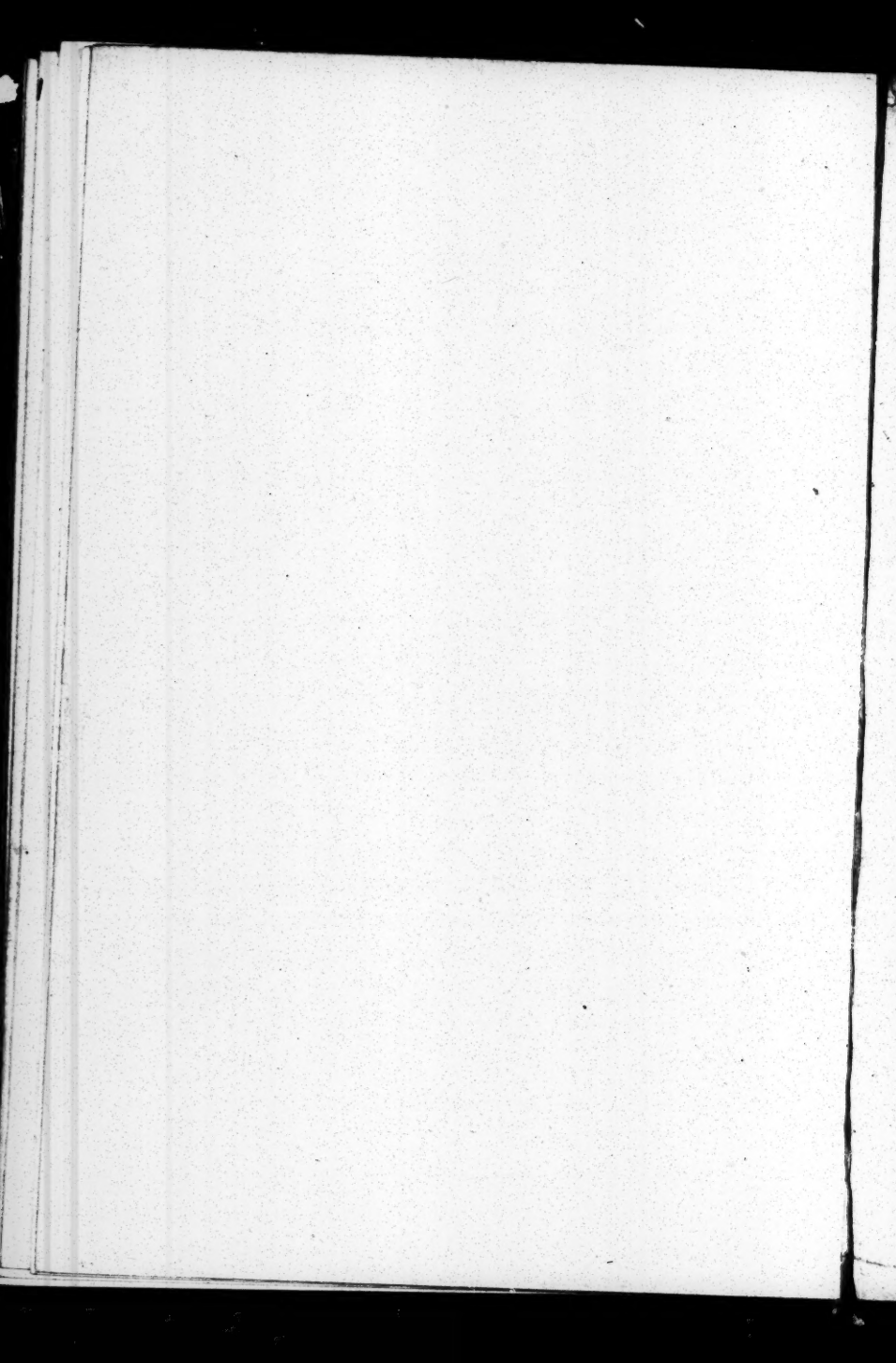
Written in the French tongue
and brought into our
vulgar by Iohn

Reade and then iudge.

*For so findeth shee a Faithfull
man, she is much to be commended
for this. Proverbs. 21*

*I will rather dwell with a Lyon and a
Beast, then to keepe house with a
married wife. Ecclesiastes. 35.*

Printed at London for
William Ponsonby. 1579.



THE TRANSLATOR

to the Reader.



Entle Reader after that I had bought this small booke in French, (bee- ing vrged therevnto by the importunitie of the seller) not waying nor regarding the matter (as a thing of smal value) I layde it vp amongst other bookes of the same language, minding at one time or other to peruse the same, but as the common Proverbe is, out of sight out of minde, and seldome seene, soone forgotten. So came it to passe with mee, vnmindefull of such matters for a long season, vntill at the last, ha- uing occasion among a company of olde writings to search and seeke out a cer- teine matter of importaunce, where a- mong other things, this French booke came vnto my hands, and laying it aside vntil the next day, I founde time and space to read it ouer. The which after I had wel perused & sufficiētly wayed, I found the matter so pleasāut & bewtified with so many rare & wonderfull exam-

A.ij.

ples,

To the Reader,

ples, that therein I tooke a speciall pleasure & delight. And blaming mine own negligence and forgetfulnesse in letting so good a matter to slip so long vniuewed and perused; I thought it good in recompence of this my neglygence, to lay all other matters aside, and to draw the same into our vulgent tongue, which being now finished and ended, such as it is, I thought it good to impart the same vnto thee gentle Reader, to the ende that thou might take thy pleasure therein, & also beholde and see the wonderful and rare excellencies of women, far passing the same that hath ben heretofore: & on the contrary side, the filthy, foolish, and detestable doings of wicked women. All the which is filled and stored with straunge and sundry examples, as well of antiquitie as of time present; that the lyke hath not bene seene. Except therefore I pray thee, by my small labour & trauaile heerein, and in so doing thou shalt encourage me to a farre greater matter, which is behaued low becometh well to the reader of this book. Farewell.

1

OF THE FIRST BEGIN-
ning and creation of a Woman, and
what Woman is to bee counted and
iudged honest and vertuous, accor-
ding to the determination and iudge-
ment of Philosophers, with an aun-
swere vnto the defamations where-
with Women are defamed and euill
spoken off, Cap. I.



Although that Thucidi-
des, whose skil in Philo-
sophie was no lesse, then
in the regiment and go-
uernance of his country
and common wealth,
(old iudge & esteeme that woman honest
and vertuous) of whose prayse and dis-
prayse there is lyttle talke among men.
Because that euen as hir body ought al-
wayes, (or for the most part) be shut vp
and secret in hir chamber: So also hir
name and fame ought not so much as to
proceade out of hir house, nor to be spred
abroad. Notwithstanding, Plutarch that
famous Philosopher, in discoursing of the
worthy and excellent qualtyes of wo-
men

15.

The praise, and

men doth not altogether mislike this opinion of Thucidides, but being somewhat contrary wth Georgias, he saith, y^e the name (& not y^e beautie of a woman) ought to be blased & spred in all places, according to y^e example of y^e auncient Romaines, y^e which as wise & discret men did publish a law, by which it was ordeined, y^e at y^e burials & funerals of women, should be made Ad-
rations & declarations, through y^e which their good doings shold be known to their posteritie, aswel as y^e doings of men. For they did esteeme & iudge it a thing against al reason, to hide y^e honour & praise of the which did merit & deserue it, fro^m y^e which women ought not to bee debarred, no moze then men. For it were a great iniurie & contempt vnto their honoz & progenie to keepe their praise in silence, & to bury it in the dungeon of obliuion.

But as for me, although I am the least as well in knowledge & vnderstanding as also of reputation and name among so many as haue taken in hande to write in their prayles: Yet notwithstanding I will not leaue off nor be discouraged, after so many learned pens,
(that

An erdi-
haunce of
the Ro-
mains.

(that haue bestowed some labour therein) to sette out by writing the most rare excellencies that are to be found in that kinde, to the ende that their glozy may be the moze and moze extolled. But for to bring this to passe, it is needefull for mee not onely to begin from the time of Deucalion, but from the creation of the first woman, to the ende that their perfections may moze and moze shyn and be manifest.

First therefore, we may read in the holy Scripture that after that the almighty God had created Heaven and Earth, and had made man according to his Image and lykenesse, he sayd, that it was not good that man shoulde be alone, and therefore he caused a slumber to fall vppon Adam, and as he slept he toke a ryb out of his side, and closed vp the flesh in steade thereof, and with the same ryb Genes. 2 made he a woman, the which by Adam was named Eua, the mother of all lyving. For euē as man is the Image and glozy of God, euē so a woman is the glozy of the man. For man is not of 1. Cor. 11. 11 the woman, but the woman of the

B.ij. man

The praise, and

man. And the man was not created for the woman; but the woman for the man. Nevertheless the man cannot be without the woman, in that she is the first necessary gift of reason, neither can the woman be without the man because of the procreation of children. For as the woman came by the man, so likewise man is by the woman. And euen herein, is now occasion giuen mee to answer vnto the common quarrell wherewith women are wrongfully defamed & blamed, in that it is sayde they haue corrupted and spoiled the world. Also they are vniustly and falsly accused to haue beguiled mankind, so that by them hath happened all these alterations and ruines. To this I answer, that although it be not possible to worke a greater mischief then that which Satan wrought against the woman, & through hir meanes hath brought vpon the world, which is, that all mankind by the corruption and fall of Adam, haue lost that souereigne gifte, which according to the infallible wil of god (from whence proceeded the sufferance) should haue bene giuen, that is, from immortall

An answer
to the quarrell
that
men haue
against
women.

fall creatures we are become mortal and
subiect to all miseries and calamities.

But yet neuerthelesse if this had not
happened, the debilitye and weakenesse
of sathan should neuer haue bene known
in this world. For if Eva had not sinned,
how should the glory of god bene known
and made manifest agaynst Sathan the
Diuell. For this cause is it that the scrip-
ture saith, that the womans seede should
tread downe the head of the serpent, who
although he be mightie, and so mightie
in deede that ther is no power nor strenght
in this world, that is able to withstand
him.ouerthelesse the seede proceeding
from the woman hath banquished and
gotten the victory ouer him. Genes. 3.

So now this chiefe and principall sin
committed through the consent that the
woman gaue vnto Sathan, was tourned
by the miraculons power of God, to the
most souereigne and greatest benefit that
euer happened in the world. For Gods
will and prouidence was, after that Sa-
than had wrought and done the most mis-
chiese that he could, that his imbecilytie
e weakenesse should be banquished by the

The sinne
committed
by the wo-
man is cause
of a most so-
ueraine be-
nefitte for
man.

The praise, and

The bene-
fit that com-
meth by
patience

Woman through whose seede he hath bene
bound and destroyed, although he wil con-
tinue lyke a roaring Lyon seeking whom
he may deuoure, and dayly stirring vp in-
finite mischiefes against goodly people, but
thereby proceedeth a great and singular
profit, and that is patience, which benefit
(with praier) is most necessary for man-
kinde. For although many good and ver-
tuous men haue through y great assaults
of sathan lost their lyues, yet hath it tur-
ned to their great profite, in that they are
past y long troubles and miseries of this
wretched world, for to rest in quietnesse.
Likewise to the wicked it is to them an
aduantage, in that they cease from their
wicked doings where by they are the lesse
punished. Therefore we must no more
cry out and say, that women haue lost
and spoyled the worlde, for therein men
are more to be blamed, in misusing the
most excellent vertue and gift that God
hath giuen them, in that they cannot sub-
due nor bydel their disordinate beastes &
appetites, but suffer themselues like brute
beasts without reason to be overcome
and subiect to the most fragill kinde.

It is a great
shame to
men to let
themselves
be deceiued
by y^e womē.

Wherein

Whererein women haue this aduantage ouer men, that where as they are accused to haue bene the causers of many mischiefes that are happened in the world, such men as by any meanes haue thus bene ouercommed by them doe merite and deserue much blame and shame, and are a great deale the moze to be reproued to let themselues thus to be vanquished and brought vnder by the perswasion of so fraile and bricke a kinde as the woman, & thereby they receiue much shame and dishonour: Inso much as the man is moze excellent and of moze knowledge and vnderstanding then the woman, by the meanes whereoff it is vnto him a most greate ignomie and reproch to suffer himselfe so to be abused and beguiled.

The Scripture saith, It is not good that man should be alone, lette vs make him a helper that may be present with him. Now this helper is the woman, who is (as we haue sayd already) the first benefit of knowledge to the man, for man should be els but as halfe made, for it is impossible for m^a, touching any perfection

Genes. 2

The praise, and

that is in him, that he may engender posteritie, (which is the most soueraigne benefit & gift of this lyfe) without the helpe and company of the woman. . . Furthermore, to whom should God distribute his graces if first and aboue all tyning creatures the woman did not bring forth into y^e world a earthly body for to be made heauenly, and as it is not sufficient empty that man & woman should be ioyned together, but also y^e such a coniunction should be wholly, so, that the seue and substance of the male, may be enioyned & brought together with y^e substance of the female: to the ende that the woman compasse the man, & that y^e masculine nature may be ioyned with y^e feminine. For God, by the lesser force & power, will, (for the encreasing of his glozy) the rather manifest himselfe the more excellent, then by his greatest power & might. And by this meaner, he thought it good to confound the sathanicall power. . . By this ye may see, that those things which the enemies and byzanders of the feminine kinde, thought, had made for y^e purpose against women, is contrariwise turned to y^e praise of the.

Seeing

By vvhath
meanes god
hath confounded
Sathan

Seeing also, that the holy writers themselves, doe altogether, holde opinion, and saye, that the sinne and transgression of Adam was necessary, and they call it a most happy fall and transgression, that hath merited and deserved such a good and gracious a redeemer. But for the conclusion of this matter, notwithstanding that the woman, seemeth to be a weakel personell and vnsustaineable, yet, if we will more exactly consider their excellencies and perfections, we may gaze and wonder at her, as at a rich and costly shoppe, furnished with all pleasures. (In whome both shine the beames of the diuine sapience) And we shall finde them endued with more greater dignitie and prebeminence then man, to whom God created of an Element grosse and heauy, (that is) euen of the fleshy and soyle clodde of earth and of the slime thereof. But he made woman of the fleshy and ribbe of a man, being purified, liuing : and hatting soule, to the ende that by their kindes and natures mixed together, they might multiply, and by the multitude of the same, replenish the earth.

The sinne of Adam was necessary according to the iudgement of holy writers.

The creating of man more excellent then the mans.

The praise, and

This therefore doth sufficiently declare and make manifest, that the celestiall giftes and graces, haue in no pointe bene denyed to the woman, but distributed and giuen to them more plentifully and haboundantly then to the man.

¶ Of the great and goodly priuiledges that from time to time hath bene giuen to woman.

Cap. 2.

The vvo-
man vvas
made in
Paradise &
the man
yvhout.

Gen. 2. 8.
Gen. 2. 9.
Gen. 2. 10.
Gen. 2. 11.
Gen. 2. 12.

¶ If the woman had no more but this onely aduantage & preheminance aboue the man that shee was made & formed in Paradise terrestrial, and man out of the same. This onely perfection doth excell al those that man may haue, and is more then sufficient to stop the mouth of all euill speakers and detraders of feminine kinde. But besides this, the woman hath so many other fayre and excellent priuiledges, that it would require Hercules labour to reperate them all, neuertheless I will enclose in this place, the most rarest and notablest, and that may best serue

serue to their decozation, to the ende that it may be knowne that they are not vn-equall to men, in dignitie, excellencie, victo-ry, and in other vertues.

First to beginne, it is most certeine and sure, that there was neuer committed a more haynous and grienous sinne, then that which was committed in the Jewes; in putting to death & crucifying the Sa- uour of the world, the which by men was most wrongfully committed and done, but as touchinge the women, they neither gaue consent, counsell nor helpe, in the matter, but did what in them lay to hin- der the same with all their power and might, as it appeareth and is manifest in the Gospell; that maketh mencion of Pu- lates wife, that sent to hir husband to turne him, and to forbid him from such a dis- loyall and vnlawfull iudgement, against an innocent and iust person. In witness whereof, our Saviour beinge risen a- gaine: did first appeare and shewe him- selfe vnto women, that they might be the first messengers and spreadders of his Resurrection and Glo- ry.

A praise of
a woman
that would
not consent
to the death
of Christ.

Math. 27

Math. 28

But

The praise, and

The priu-
ledge of
women to
giue name
to their
children.

Gen. 29.
29.
30.
31.
32.
33.
34.
35.
36.
37.
38.
39.
40.
41.
42.
43.
44.
45.
46.
47.
48.
49.
50.

Other pri-
uiledges of
women.
Exod. 1.
Math. 23.
Deutro. 20.

De. 4. 14. 15.

But if we wil haue witnesses of auncient memory of the priuiledges of women, we read in the booke of Genesis, that they had this priuiledge, to giue names into their children, as it appeareth by Lea and Rachel, Jacobs wiues, that gaue names themselves vnto their children. As of the wife of Menoah, the mother of Sampson, that gaue the name vnto him: saue Sampson, as appeareth in the booke of Judges. 13. Chapter.

When Pharaio king of Aegypt, commaunded that all the male children should be slaine, he gaue expresse charge, to preserve the females, such as Herode gaue commaundement to kill all the male children vnder the age of two yeares; but he did attempt nothing againe the female kinde. And by lyke priuiledges in times past, women wer preferred in the expugnation of Townes, Cities, and Castles, that were taken by the force of warre, where the men were slaine, but the women pardoned. And not onely the women did enioye these faire priuiledges, but in the fauour and pitie of them, the new married men were exempted and free from

from going to the warres, yea, although
 that cities were in extreme daunger, and
 al for the loue of their new married wife.
 Now that the female kinde haue alwaies
 bene priuiledged, it appeareth by these
 former examples. And not onely amonge
 reasonable creatures, but also amonge
 those that are altogether deprived of the
 gift of reason. It appeareth in the lawe
 of Moses, by the which when any one
 had founde a birdes nest, either in the
 fields or in any tree, if that he founde the
 female sitting in y^e nest, it was not law-
 full nor permitted, for to take hir, or to do
 hir any hurt, but neuertheles it was per-
 mitted to take y^e young ones if y^e female
 wer not ther. But for to returne to y^e pri-
 uiledge of womē, Hipocrastes in his booke
 that he hath made, hath left in writing,
 that euen as women grow faster then
 men, also by the like means they become
 sooner discret, sober and wise, and this is
 turned to a priuiledge by the lawmakers,
 the which declare the women to bee of
 sufficient yeares being come to nine-
 teene, and the men at twentie. And vnto
 women it is permitted and lawefull to
 make

Deutr. 22.

The priuilege of
 women in
 that thei be
 declared
 of suffici-
 cient yeares
 before men.

The praise, and

make testaments and wills at twelue yeares of age, and men, not untill they come to fouretene yeares. But in some countreyes, they are sooner declared of yeares sufficient, then by the lawes of the auncient lawgiuers. For the wardship of y^e feminine kinde endeth at sixtene yeares of age. But for men it endeth not untill they come to twentie yeares, as though the climate causeth them to be moze wise and sober in that age, then in other

The priuiledge of the women of Campania.

Provinces and Countreyes. Likewise it is to be meruayled of the priuiledge of the women of the country of Campania, of which the custome of the province is such, that a noble woman if she marry a man rusticall and base bozne: yet she doth ennoble him and make him a gentleman. And by this I call to remembraunce a certeine hystoꝝy recited by Plutarch in his booke that he hath made of worthy wo-

The excellencie of y^e women of Gaulle Celticke in times past as Plutarch doth record

men, where he sayth, that in times past, the women of Gaulle Celticke, were in such great reputatiō for their vertue, that by the accomde and agrement made betwene Hannibal and the Celtrians, it was concluded, that if any one of the Celts or

Gauls

Gauls did complaine of a Carthagenian, that y^e Paiesirates of the Carthagenians shoulde be Judge. But to the contrary, if that a Carthagenian were wronged or molested by any of the Celtrians, that the iudgement and correction should bee according to the determination & iudgement of the women of Gaulle Celticke, so greatly were they had in reputation and renoune for their vertue. And to the ende that this seeme not straunge, that women in times past haue iudged men, not onely amongst the heathen hath this authoritie bene: but also among the people of God they haue had this preheminance of iudgeing, as Debora the prophetesse, that iudged the people of Israel, & did defende the against y^e power of the king of y^e Cananites named Iabin y^e had afflicted y^e chilozen of Israel y^e space of twentie years, vntil the time that Iahel, that godly & vertuous woman & no lesse couragious then Panthasilla, with a bold heart, killed Siserra, Captaine of y^e host of the Cananites in striking a naile of y^e tent thzough y^e temples of his head. For y^e which victorie, Debora did sing a song of thanksgiuing vnto God.

Judges the
5.

These

The praise, and

These things considered, those that are detractors of senientine kinde, may haue good occasion to holde their peace, and to speake euill of them no more, seeing that they are nothing inferiour to men. Amongest the Troglodites a people of Aethiopia, the most barbarous and farthest from ciuilitie of all the inhabitantes of the earth, there women haue this authority ouer them, to appointe and set the men forth a warfare, as they shall thincke good, and the men dare not offense nor gaynesay them by no meanes. For they take it for a great crime and offence, to anger or displease them by any manner of meanes.

¶ Of the excellency of women, and of their ingenious inuentions.
Cap. 3.

Like things
since they
were inue
ted were
neuer lost.

Marcus Varo sayth, that in the beginning there were five things, the which after they were inuented, they were so esteemed of men, that they would neuer since suffer them to be lost. The first of them, was to liue altogether in
Townes,

Townes, Cities, Boroughes, Villages,
and common weales. The seconde was,
the inuention of letters, the thirde, the
lawes, the fourth the Barbers, the which
Publius Tirinius brought first from Si-
cily to Rome, wher they liued foure hun-
dredth fiftie foure yeares, without cutting
off their haire or shaning. The fift, the in-
uentio of Dials, of y^e which Aneximenes
was the inuento^r. And I suppose there is
no man be he neuer so dul in iudgement,
but will say and knoweth well inough,
that the inuention of letters is the most
chiefest of al others y^e euer were inuen-
ted in the world, for without the benefite
of them our lyfe should be as no lyfe, but
rather a death and a very graue. There-
fore it is the best and most excellent in-
uention of all the rest that euer was. For
by the onely vse of them the eternitie
of the memo^ry is enerlasting. So that
if praises ought to bee giuen, and the me-
mo^riall to bee extolled, of those that haue
invented diuers & sundry things, as well
for the ornament and content of y^e minde,
as also for the blage & exercise of y^e body.
Such mo^re, and by greater reason this
C. honour

The praise, and

honour is due to those y are y inuentors of letters. For the most greatest & chiefeſt inuention of all others, is out of doubt y letters, which are conseruers of all other inuentions, & without the benefit thereof no inuention can be kept. They make those things y were a thousand yeares past, as though they wer present. They giue knowledge to men now liuing of y which others in times past did & knew. And y which me now liuing finde out & inuent, is by letters conserued & kept to them y are to come.

Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Theophrastus, & all the rest of the Philosophers of times past, shoulde not haue bene in such reputation and estimation as we do take them, without the onely benefit of y inuention of letters. And for to be short, all our humaine life, shoulde be a manifest death, without the knowledge of them.

But who hath bene the inuentor of so great a benefit for mankind, hath it bene the Philosophers and the wise men in times past: no truely. For certainly this did seeme to passe the capacitie of mans minde. And if we may put any confidence in Aristotle, he saith, that such persons as
are

are composed & made of flesh more soft & delicate the others, they are of better wit & vnderstanding then the rest. Now there is none but knoweth, that the flesh & skin of a womā, is more softer, whiter & tenderer, then the mans. By the meanes wheroff hath ben wel known the great knowledge of their minde, in al subtil innētions to haue out passed men, as may be seene by many faire and curious woꝝkes so to excel, that it passeth the industry of man. And likewise of letters & sciences, for to manifest and shew, that euen as by them men be boꝝne, euen so proceedeth frō them humaine sciences. Wheroff the noble and famous Carmenta was y^e inuentrice, whō some name Nicostratia, Mother to Euander of Arcadia. Although y^e Plinie by the authozitie of Epiganes, both enforce to proue y^e they were & haue bene eternall, although he would say they began & had their oziginall with the woꝝlde. Neuertheles al authozs by cōmon cōsent, do attribute y^e innētion of y^e Latin letters, to y^e foresaid Carmenta oz Nicostratia. Which innētio truely aboue al y^e rest is woodeful & to be meruailed at, in the which did

Women y^e
inventers of
letters.

The praise, and

Learned
men by lear-
ning, haue
bene put to
silence by
vvomen.

appeare the deepe knowledge of hir minde
foz to comprehend in a few letters all the
sounds of the voice which seemeth infi-
nite. In times past the learned Leontia
did confute and ouercame with reasons
the famous Theophrastes, as also that
worthy Eustochium did saint Hierome :
who was not ashamed to confesse that he
was overcome by hir in that he could not
resolue nor aunswere the questions that
she had propounded.

Ceres the
first that
found out
the vway
to make
bread of
vvheate.

And not onely women haue inuented
the thinges that decke and beautifie the
minde, but also those that serue for the
entertainment and nourishing of the bo-
dy. For as in times past men were not al-
together brought from their sauage and
brutish life, but rather hauing more beast-
like nature then humanitie. They liued
with ackozns and rotes, untill the noble
and worthy woman Ceres found meanes
to sow wheate, & shewed the way how
to make bread in Attica, Italy, and in Si-
cily, for the which cause shee was reputed
and iudged a Goddess.

But she profited the worlde a great
deale more by the inuenting of lawes
that

dispraise of Women. II

that shee founde out, the which are no lesse wonderfull then the letters, but rather moze necessary & profitable to men, (without the which) neither houses noz cities, cōmon weales noz communalities, no noz the woꝛld it selfe, cannot stand noz continue . And yet notwithstanding, they are the inuentiō of the woman. For this Ceres first of all gaue lawes vnto men, if we will beleue & giue credit to Diodore, that doth affirme it in his. 6. and Quid in the. 5. of his transfoꝛmations, oꝛ Metoꝛmorphosis.

The same
Ceres the
inuentrice
of lawes.

And in lyke manner Herodotus, the father of Histories, in his. 6. And therefore by Virgil in his Aeneidos, she is called the lawgiuer, the which also is affirmed by Plinie, in the. 7. of his naturall history.

And not onely women haue had a care and study to inuent things that serue for to furnish the minde, but also they haue bene carefull to instruct and teach things that serue for the profite of the body. For Isis was the first occasion of tyeledge and plowing of the earth.

In times past, men were so farre

C.iii. from

from knowledge, that they were clothed with nothing but beastes skinnēs, vntill that women thzough their subtil inuention founde out the meanes to spinne and carde Woll. In whiche Arte the godd and vertuous Tanaquil was very famous and excellent, who for the selfe same cause was named the Goddesse of good huswiues. But the first that founde out the way to spinne and card, was a woman of Lidia named Arachne, and hir sonne Closcher, the first inuento, of wheeles and spindells for to spinne Woll, as witnesseth, Plinie and Ouid in his Metamorphosis. And at what stape would the lyfe of man haue bene, if Pallas had not inuented and founde out the way and manner to spinne, twist, and make linnen: for without the vse thereof mans life shoulde haue bene more foule, vncleane, and filthy, then beuie beastes. And truely without the vse of Linnen we shoulde bee more vnpure and vncleane then euer was Augea stable, as the common prouerbe sayth.

Tanaquil
or Calia, the
Goddesse of
good hus-
wiues.

Plini. li. 7
Ouid. li. 6

The manner
how to
make linnen,
inuented by
Pallas.

If therfore we will by little and little seeke out the rare excellencies that are in women, we would the more esteeme of them and giue them praises for their excellent gyftes. For oftentimes it happeneth that we giue no regarde of thinges proceedinge by nature: for fault that we doe not diligently and carefully knowe and seeke out the excellencies and worthynesse of the same, as we see by these women, The which because they are commonly amongst vs, they are the lesse prayed and esteemed of each one. But when that more exactly we come to the consideration of the singuler gifts of their mindes, we doe finde that the celestially and heauenly graces haue bene more haboundantly and more excellently bestowed vpon them then vpon men. For what is the man, that euer was the inuentor of a better or more famous a thinge then letters, for the ornament of the spirite, with lawes and artes, and also to sow wheate, to card wollen, & spin linnen for the preservation of mens bodies, and all these as you may see and perceiue

If we would consider the excellencie of women we would praise them greatly.

The praise, and

are feminine inuentions.

The vvitty
invention
of y^e queene
Semeramis
for to bes
guile the
couetous-
nes of men.

Who would not wonder at the ingenious and subtil inuention that was made by Semeramis Queene of Caria, for to mock the vn-satiabie couetousnes of men. Who caused to be made a faire & gorgeous tombe with this inscription. What king so euer hath neede of golde or siluer, let him open this monument and hee shall finde to his desire. It came to passe a longe time after, that king Darius, contemplating and beholding the excellencie and beautie of so fayre a Tombe and monument, at the last founde out this inscription, which after hee had wel perused and read, hee did beleue the same to be true, and therefore hee made it to be opened, but within he found wrytten and graued vpon the stone, these wordes followinge. If thou were not a wicked and a couetous man, thou wouldest neuer remoue nor open the monumentes nor memoeries of the deade, to seeke riches.

Eusebius in his Ecclesiasticall historye, doth repeate a wittie inuention practised by the Mother of Origen,
foz

for to keepe him from receiuing Martirdome with diuers others, he being determined willyngly to offer and present himselfe therevnto. But his mother bearing a natural affection to hir sonne, & perceiuing that she coulde not tourne his minde nor perswade him from the same: She had knowledge what daye he woulde goe offer himselfe to Sacrifice and to receiue Martirdome, the very same night she found the meanes to enter secretly into his chamber, and finding ther all his apparel and vestments, she caried them away with hir. So that in the morning Origen rising with deliberation of purpose to go to receiue Martirdome, was letted by the sleight and polycie of his mother: for he could not go, vnlesse he had gone naked, wheroff he was ashamed.

The sleight
of Origen's
mother to
let him frō
Martirdome
Euse. li. 8.
cap. 2.

There are found an infinite number of such subtil and wittie sleightes & inuentions of women, by which for to declare & set out, would be tedious and ouer long for the Reader, and therefore I will ende this matter by rehearsing of an inuention and subtil practise of a

C. v. woman

The praise, and

**A pety po
ticke of a
woman of
our time co.
caine the ho
nestie of a
kinfwoma
of hirs.**

woman in our time, & which was as craftely brought to passe, as any of these before spoke. This womā desiring to saue & honestie of a certeine Neece or kinswoman of hirs that was with childe, and neuer maryed, perceiuing that hir belly began to swell, she founde the meanes to know the truth, which when she had perceiued to be true, she caused hir kinswoman, to keepe hir selfe in a chamber secretlye in hir house with hir, vntill the ende of nine months.

Now it soztuned at that time that the womā hir self was also great with childe, (but it was lawfully by hir husband in wedlocke) and both had almost one time to be delyuered, but first it chaunced that the woman was delyuered, and the time of hir childebbede being past about thre weekes, it happened that hir neece & kinswoman began to trauaile with childe, but it was so secret that it was knowne to none but to hir Aunt and hir selfe. And being deliuered, hir Aunt which as I said was but newly risen from hir childebbed, sayned hir selfe to be in labour and trauaile agayne, and sodeinly before they could

could get the Midwife and women together (having hir kinswomans childe, shee made them to thinke and beleue that before their comming she was suddenly deliuered of that seconde childe. Whereoff all they wondered and meruayled at the straungenesse of the thing.

And I my selfe likewise did enquire of many skilfull and learned Physicians, whether this might be naturally: I meane that a woman may trauell and be deliuered of two children, being distance & termed sixteen daies or three weekes between the birth of the first & seconde. But they affirme and uphold the same to be impossible, and yet I did ensure them the facte to be most true, not knowing at that time how it came to passe, but shortly after it was knowne and spread all about, & I was ashamed in y^e I had so stoutly affirmed it to be true, y^e two childre wer borne of one woman, in the manner as I haue before declared, being the terme of three weekes distance between the birth of them both, but in the ende, Time, the father of truth, brought this subtile and polylike inuention to light.

Of

The praise, and

Of two women the which in putting
vppon them mans apparell, did ob-
taine the two greatest estates and so-
ueraigneties of the world, Cap.4.

This example is not here set down
for to be followed of the feminine
kinde.

But for that it is one of the won-
derfullest things and chaunces that euer
happened in the world. That a woman
should attaine to such great knowledge,
that through the profoundnesse thereof,
she hath attained to the triple crowne,
& was made Pope, being in mans ap-
parell and so taken. This woman that
we talke off, was borne in Duchlande,
who in hir youth tooke mannes gar-
mentes vppon hir, and so named hir
selfe Iohn. And leauing hir countrey,
she hearing of the fame of the Citie of
Athens, traauayled thether. Where at
that time flourished the well spring of
all sciences and learning, and there in
short time, she profited so well in all
kinde of knowledge and study that from
thence she went to Rome, & there read
openly

openly in the schooles, apparailled lyke a doctor, & was taken for one of the most learned men that wer lyuing in those dayes, and he came to such fauour and credite, that the Papall seate being vacant throught the death of Leo the fourth, about the yeare of our Lord .852. And he being reputed and taken for a man, was by common consent elected Pope & made souereigne Pontiffe, & kept the seat the space of two yeares, a month, and foure dayes. And since his time the popes haue vsed to sit in a hollow chaire for feare to be so abused, but by thereby, by feeling they might know whether the partie chosen to that dignitie, be a man or a womā. And yet Platine giueth an other reason why they vse a hollow chaire, saying that the same is to the ende that the Pope being lifted vp with pride, may thereby remember and consider that he is a man, and so know his owne frailtynesse. For if there were no other reason, but to know whether he be perfect in his members, that were to follow the custome of the Priapists and auncient Idolaters of Aegypt, by which receiue

The prayse, and

The auncient Aegiptians vould neuer admit nor suffer a gelded man to bee a Priest.

Receiue no priest for to make their sacrifices, before y he be first handeled and consecrated to their God Priapus, for to know whether he be a naturall man, for they will admit none that be gelded.

The other example is of no lesse admiration, and that is of Theodosia the Emperesse of Constantinoble, who after that the Empire was vacant through y death of Constantine hir husband, and hir brother, Zoe, gave hir selfe so to y affaires, of the Empire, y without y helpe either, of father, husband, or brother, she gouerned very honourably the Empire for the space of two yeares and no more, for she lyued no longer, being bewayled and lamented of all the people, for that she reigned in great peace and prosperitie, and gouerned hir subiects peaceably, about the yeare of our Lord. 1050.

To these may be added the worthy and famous Emperesse Zenobia, who after the death of the Emperour Odonatus hir husband, did most worthely gouerne the Empire of Asia, vntill such time as Aurelian the Emperour triumphed ouer hir.

Of

¶ Of the Amazons and other warre
like women, and of tenne wo-
men that were taken in mans
apparell fighting valiauntly
in the dayes of Claudius the
second, Cap. 5.

Those that seeketh all the meanes they
can to diminish the honour of women,
and that take delight and pleasure to abase
and extinguish their perfection, chargeing,
and burthening the with vnconstancie and
lightnesse, they doe not consider that men
doe incurre and tangle themselves a great
deale moze with y-like imperfections, and
that women in all kindes of vertue are not
onely equall with men, but doe also passe
and excell them, for although that menne
thinke to haue this aduantage ouer wo-
men to be moze apt and fit for the warre
then they, yea and moze puissant and stron-
ger: Yet neuertherthelesse, they that will
giue creditte to auncient Histories, they
shall finde that they bee in no poynt inferi-
our vnto men in valpantnesse.

Therefore for this same purpose,
let

The prayse, and

let them read Amian, Marcellin, Truce Pompey, Iustin, Oroseus, Diodore the Sicilian, Plinie, Herodotus, Quintus Curtius, Solon, and Pomponius Mela, in their histories and memoriall actes that they haue set forth of the Amazons, and they shal finde how valpauently they haue behaued themselves in their time, yea, so courageously, that they haue left behinde them the glozy and fame thereof, vniuersally in the world.

These Amazons haue had their abiding in Scythia Asiaticke, which Province is to the North part of Asia, (which at this daye is called Tartaria) whose vertues and noble prowesse haue bene in such reputation and fame, that Euristes King of Athens was constrained to seeke to Hercules, and to moue him to take armes against the Amazons. The whiche Hercules desirous of honour hauinge in his companye Theseus, and other of his friends, went by Sea, for to make warre against Orithia and Antiopa Quenes ouer the sayd Amazons, the whiche a lyttle before to reuenge themselves on Euristes, and of the

Hercules &
Theseus
went to
fight with
the Ama-
zons

The Greekes, they passed into Europ, and
 beeing come to the borders and limits of
 Athens, they did wonderful harmes and
 made great spoyle. And long time after
 that, y^e Grecks passing into Asia, for to co-
 quer the noble citie of Troy, Panthasilla
 Quene of y^e sayd Amazons remembryng
 the domage & wrong that hir auncestors
 had susteined of the Greekes, shee came
 with a mightie power to ayde the Troy-
 ans; where they did worthy seates of
 armes worthy of remembraunce, although
 that Panthasilla lost hir lyfe by y^e hands
 of Achilles, by the meanes wheroff the
 rest that were left alieue, retourned into
 their countrey and auncient possessions,
 whereas they liued vntill the time that
 Alexander the great made warre against
 the Hircans. At which time Thelastris
 Quene of the said Amazons came to se
 Alexander, and there made offer of hir
 body to his person and of all that was in
 hir power.

Panthasilla
 came to sug-
 cour the
 Troyans

And there they bled such great fami-
 liaritie and friendship together, that shee
 continued with him thirtene dayes, both
 in open & in secret conuersation wth him,

D.

then

The praise, and
then taking hir leaue of him, shee retur-
ned into hir Country.

The decaye
of the Ama-
zons.

But as it is the propertie of time to
consume all thinges : euen so the pow-
er of the Amazons came to decay, so that
by succession of tyme their Kingedome
was vtterlye wasted and came to ru-
ine.

This Hystoꝛye of the Amazons,
bzingeth to my remembraunce an o-
ther that is founde in the lyfe of the
Emperour Claudius the seconde, who
triumphed ouer the Gothes.

But in a certeyne battayle that hee
hadde agaynst them, there were ta-
ken tenne Souldyers fightinge verve
valyauntlye, the whiche when they
were vnarmed were founde to bee wo-
men, by reason whercoff some toke
opinion that they came of the lyg-
nage of the Amazons, and as An-
drew Theuet dothe witnesse in his
descriptyon of the Weste Indies,
there is in the sayde Countreie an
Ilande inhabtyed with woemen, the
whiche they keepe and defende moste
valy.

balyauntlye, and their shieldes are the shelles of Tosterells, throughte the whiche the shotte of a handegunne will scant enter.

And not onely these warlyke Amazons haue bene counted balyaunt and famous: But also many others, that in nothinge haue bene inferioure to them, as Lactantius dothe recorde, howe that vppon a tyme the Lacedemonians dyd laye siege vnto the Citie of Messenia: But they of the Cytie thinckinge to vse policie agaynst their enemyes, vppon a tyme they gotte pryuelie oute and ranne befoze the Cytie of Lacedemonia, thinckinge to suppressse it with their sodayne inuasion.

But the women of Lacedemonia perceiuinge their intent, came sodaynly out agaynst theyr enemyes and putte them to flight.

The vvor-
thines of
vwoman of
Spartha,

In memory whereoff, there was erected and made an Image of Venus, all armed, for an immortall fame and memory of this victorie.

The praise, and

The stoute
courage of
the vvomen
of Cimbria.

The renowne of the women of Cimbria is woorthy of no lesse praise then those of Lacennes, for after that the Romaine Consuls, Marius & Catullus, had obtained victoꝝ ouer the Cimbrians, and had killed of them in one battell, a hundredeth and forty thousand, yet for all that they had as much to do to ouercome the women, the which had so fortified themselves amongst the stufte and cariage, as if they had bene within stronge Bulwarkes and Castles, for to defende their chastitie and honour, and there they fought with stoute & manlike courages, with such an obstinacie, that when they perceiued that they could no longer resist the force & strength of the Romaines, they sent an embassade to Marius, (that was created Consul by the Romaines, against the Cimbrians) for their libertie, which when they sawe & Marius would not by no meanes graunt, being destitute and out of all hope to finde fauour, they killed one an other, in a wonderfull furye and desperate rage, to the ende that they woulde not fall into the handes of cruell Marius. And in this dispayze
some

some of them hanged themselves on the
 next trees, and some vppon the coppes
 and endes of the Cartes, yea, with
 their owne haire, in steele of ropes, a
 monge the which there was one wo-
 man founde hanging on a tree, hauinge
 at each foot a child hanging, coueting ra-
 ther to destroy & so do themselves, then
 to fall into the vnnmercifull handes of
 their enemies, to lose their name and cha-
 stitie. And this ouerthrow and destruc-
 tion of the Cimbrians happened in the
 yeare befoze the incarnation of Christ
 ninetie foure.

The vvon-
 derfull de-
 struction of
 the said vvo-
 men of Cim-
 bria.

This disasterre and cruell fact of the
 Cimbrians notwithstandinge hath no-
 thing at al diminished the stoute and va-
 liaunt actes of diuerse famous women,
 that hath liued since that time. For wee
 reade of Zenobia the Quene of Pal-
 merians, holwe shee gaue a stronge bat-
 taile vnto the Emperour Aurelian, cau-
 singe him and his host at the first to
 flye, but he making no great accompt of
 hir, but as an other woman, did write a
 letter vnto hir, to laye a side hir wea-
 pon and to come & submit hir selfe vn-

The praise, and

to him. But after that shee had receiued his letter, shee sent him an answer thereoff, in this order following.

Answer
come from a
noble mind
that Zeno-
bia made to
Aurelian
the Empe-
rour.

I neuer knewe man aske and demaunde a thing so vnreasonable as thou doest, for that is to be obteyned and gotten through vertue and worthynes, the which thou doest require by thy letter. Thou doest commaund mee to submitte and render my selfe vnto thee: Thou art not ignoraunt I am sure howe that the Quene Cleopatra dyd chioise rather to dye then to liue in dishonour, euen so, I lette thee to vnderstande, that I hope to want no helpe, no more then I want courage to beate downe thy pride.

The founte
and noble
hearts of
women of
Thracia.

Whereouer it is much to bee meruailed at, of the women of the Countrey of Thracia in Europe. The which in times past, woulde endure and abyde to be ceared and marked in the foreheads with a whotte burning yron, in token and witnesse of their gentyltye and noblenesse of byrth, and those that were vnnoble and of base byrth, hadde not the priuiledge to bee thus marked.

By this then that we haue recited,
 maye manyfestlye appeare that noble-
 nesse and stoute courage doth not want
 noꝛ fayle in women no moꝛe then in
 men, and also they are so actiue in feates
 of armes, that the Georgians of Tar-
 taria, make of their wiues balyaunt and
 woꝛthy Shoulders. And Aeneas Syl-
 uius that afterwarde was Pope Pius in
 the histoꝛy of Bohemia, doth make men-
 tion that the women of that Countrey
 haue the rule and souereigntie.

But foꝛ that so many histoꝛyes as
 well sacred as prophane, are all full of
 the noble pꝛouesse and balyaunt actes
 of women and of the feates of
 armes that they haue done, I
 will stand no longer
 vpon the same,
 but pꝛocēde to
 describe
 and set out their other
 pꝛofections and
 vertues.

The praise, and
¶ Of women through whose
meanes countryes and common
weales haue bene purged and
cleansed of such Tyrantes as did
infect & molest them, Cap. 6.

¶ There is nothing in this worlde that
hath moze eleuated the same and re-
nolune of worthy personnes noz hath
made it moze perdurable then the ouer-
throwe and killinge of Tyzauntes, for
that they haue continuallye, bene hated
and despised of good men, as in times
past such countryes and common weales
that haue bene vered and waxed with
Tyzauntes, haue in the recompence
and rewarde of those that haue expel-
led and destroyed them, erected and
made Pictures and Images of their bo-
dyes, and haue had them so farre in ho-
noure and reputation that they haue
called them the sonnes and friends of
God, and some people haue better este-
med the killinge of a Tyzant, then the
conquest and winning of a whole Pro-
uince or Countrey, for their common
weale.

Polw

Now then seeing that many men haue made the glozy of their name as it were immortall, and haue as it were also made themselves a way to eternall blisse, in purging their countrey from the oppression of tyrants. In lyke manner there is also founde a great number of vertuous and famous women y haue atteyned and gotten immortal prayse for killing of tyrants in their nations and countreyes, among y which the valiant & Iudith. worthy woman Iudith may take the first place & degree of honour. For Nabuchodonosor. (whose pride was exalted to heauen) gaue commaundement by Holo- phernes generall Captaine of his hoast, that all the world should be obedient vnto him. The which his commaundement being once known and published, many Kings and Princes did submitte themselves, and gaue to Holophernes, homage, honour, and reuerence, who put his whole power & strength to cause the Iewes also the people of God, to doe the like, and to submit themselves vnder his yoake and obedience. And bicause that they did resist his power, he did

D. v.

afflict

The praise, and

afflict & oppresse them with cruell wars,
the which they could no longer endure,
and that knowing the good and vertus
ous woman Iudith, she went into his
chamber and putting on sackcloth,
she made his prayers, humbling his
selfe vnto G D D, to prouoke him to
mercy, and after that, attiring his selfe
with most pretious Jewells, and also
in gorgeous apparayle, she bololy went
out of Bethulia toward the campe of Ho-
lophernes, where being stayed and
taken by his men of warre, shee was
brought to his presence: who beholding
her, found her so beautifull, and so en-
dued with all perfections, wherewith
Nature may furnish and beautifie a per-
son, so to make her perfect in al things,
that being overcome with her beautie,
she found such fauour in his sight, that
she might go and come at al houres, day
and night through his campe, with her
handmaide & not one to molest her. And
thus being beyond al measure passioned
with her loue, he commaunded Vaga
his Chamberlayne to declare vnto her
his desire, and she made aunswer that
she

He would in all things fulfill his Lords request.

At which words Holophernes was so glad and merry, that he drank more freely that night then he was accustomed to doe.

And the time being come for to take their rest, Vago did shutte Iudith in the chamber of Holophernes, who being drunken with wine, fell in sleepe so soon as he was layde.

By the meanes whereoff, Iudith The noble courage of Iudeth that killed the great captain holophernes, enemy to gods people. finding opportunitie to bee revenged of the enemy of **G O D S** people, tooke holde of his sword hanging by his bed side, and being strengthened by the helpe of God, shee smote of his heade, and gaue it to hir handmayde to keepe. And after this manner she triumphed ouer Holophernes, enemye vnto **G O D S** people, who was of the whole world so much feared, honored, and redoubted, that he was thought to be invincible, but yet neuertheles he was overcome by theudent and sober wit of the godly and vertuous woman Iudith.

The valyant Iahel, wife to Haber, is also

The praise, and

The great
& bold en-
terprise of
Iahel that
killed Sisera
Iudg. 4

also woorthy of immortal prayse, for that with a stout heart she killed Sisera the Captaine of the Cananites, that with Iabin their king did soze afflict the people of the Iewes, but Sisera hauing lost the battayle, fledde, and was fayne to hide himselfe in Iahels tent, where fallyng a sleepe, she toke a nayle of the tent, and with a hammer boldly dyaue it into the temples of his head, and so he died by the hands of a woman.

In lyke manner that woman that killed that cruell Tyrant Abimilech, sonne to Ierobaal, doth merite great and laudable prayse, who killed all his brethren euen Iyr. and destroyed the cittie of Sichem and made it wast, and sowed salt therein, and also burned the Tower and a thousand people therein, of whom no man could haue right. Yet notwithstanding, after that he had besieged and taken Thebes and was come to the Tower to fight agaynst it, and being nere vnto the gate thereof, a certeine woman within the Tower cast a peece of a Millstone vpon his head and all to brake his bryne panne. But when he felte himselfe

Abimilech
that tyrant
was slaine
by a woman.
Iudg. 9

selfe thus shamefully wounded to death by a woman, for that he would couer his dishonour to be thus slayn by a woman, he called hastily to a young man y bare his harnesse, and sayd vnto him: Draw thy sworde and slay me, that men boast not hereafter and say, that a woman slew him.

The lyke chaunce happened to king Pyrrhus, who besieging the cite of Argiue, and being nere vnto the walls, sodeinely a woman did cast downe a tile stone vppon his head, wherewithall being hurt, and thzough the great effusion of bloud that fell from the wound, he was so blynded, that he was slayne of a souldier named Zopyrus.

Pyrrhus
fore vvor-
ded by a
woman.

Aretaphilla, is wonderfully commended and praysed bicause that thzough great perill and daunger of hir body, she deliuered hir countrey from the tyranny of Nicostratus and Leander, the which persons thzough hir wisdome and counsell were put to death, and caused Calistus to be burnt, y was y cause of their tyranny. As it is moze at large declared by Plutarch in his booke of worthy women.

Nicostratus & Leander put to death by y politicke counsell of Aretaphilla for their tyranny.

When

The praise, and

Cyrus slain
by Thomi-
ris queene
of Scythia.

When that great and mightie Em-
perour Cyrus was faine from his wonted
clemencie and gentlenesse, and become
cruell and tyrannous, he was taken in
warre by Thomiris Queene of the Sci-
thians, who caused his head to be cut off,
& in remembrance of his crueltie she made
it to be cast into a vessell of full blood,
saying these words. Now Cyrus drinks
thy fill of that thou couldest neuer be sa-
tisfied.

Therefore we must needs confesse
and say that women haue bene famous
and valiant, in that they haue purged
kingdomes, cities and countreyes, & red-
deth them from the oppression of Tyrants,
wherein all the industry and power of
men could not set order nor finde reme-
die without the meanes of these noble
and couragious women.

Of Ieane the Mayde of Fraunce,
through whose means the French
king recouered part of his Realm
agayne that the Englishmen had
wonne.

Cap. 7.

Although

Although y^e the hystorie of this mayde be as it were common in the eares of a greate many, bicause it is mentioned in our Chronicles, yet is it not so rise vnto vs, as it is to the French nation, who make their boast of this mayde as one sent to them by diuine inspiration, to their helpe and succour. But such as they were I shall partely declare vnto you, as I finde in the French Chronicle.

This Ieane, whether it were by diuine inspiration or by sozcerie I cannot tell, but most boldly and stoutly she came vnto King Charles the seventh, called Charles the Dolphin, whom that noble & famous king of England Henry the fift had chased out of his kingdome, leuing him a verie little parte of the Realme of Fraunce to fly vnto for his refuge, but after his death thorow y^e dissention that fel amongst the nobilytie of England by little and little this Charles recovered againe his realme and dominion. Vnto him as I saide came this Ieane, and promysed vnto him many straunge and woonderfull thinges: that is,
that

The praise, and

that she would helpe him to recouer the Realme, that she would rayse the siege of Orleance, that was besieged by the Englishmen, that shee would helpe the Kinge to his crowne, and that she would know the King among all his Lords although he did disguise himselfe. Further she sayd, that she should haue to helpe hir selfe withall a sword, & long time before was lefte at Fierboyes which is in the countrey of Touraine in Saint Katherins Church.

Moreouer that the towne of Troyes in Campania shoulde be rendered vnto him within thre dayes, & that the King should recouer all his Realme agayne and keepe it in peaceable possession.

And also she reuealed and opened vnto him, many other things the which afterward came to passe, as she had fore shewed.

And in dede the French Nation is much bounde to extoll and prayse hir, for they will saye vnto this daye, that the Realme of Fraunce had bene all English without the miraculous force and policie of this Mayde, thzough whose ayde the
Dolphin

Dolphin Charles that at that time was king but of a few Townes and Boroughs, did at y last conquer al his whole Realme againe, except Callis & the frontiers thereof, that was mainteined and kept by vs the space of almost thre hundredeth yeares, untill the raigne of Henry de Vallois king of Fraunce the seconde of that name, who thzough pollicy obtained y same, when this our Realme of England was oppressed with Spaniardes in the dayes of Quene Mary. And truly it is to be meruailed that god thzough the meanes of this mayden suffered the Realme of Fraunce to fall into the rule & domination of the French king againe and to diminish the strength of the Englishmen dayly more and more.

But all things are subiect to alteration & chaunge: euen so it chaunced vnto this maide, in whome the French men reposed their whole trust. For as the Englishmen were besieginge the towne of Compeignia, the maide Ieane came to succour & helpe the besieged with a great number of Frenchmen. But she was taken and hir power ouerthrowne, and as

The praise, and

ter that she was sent to Roan, where by reason that she was taken and suspected to be a Sorcerer using witchcraft, she was condemned to be burnt, and so she was put to death. And therefore it was thought and iudged that Charles the French king erred in fayth, and therefore not woorthy to beare the name of a king but to be put from his kingdome, because that he put his trust in this mayde and used hir counsel, who was afterward proved to be a Sorcerer, using Magicke.

For it is the duetie of all kinges, to expell, cut off, and roote out all soothsayers, charmers, cuniorers, Withes, Sorcerers, and all such as use any inuocations or familiaritie with the Diuel, contrary to Gods lawe, as we may read in the holy Scripture. Again, there be some that iudge this maide a holy woman & a Saint, sent by God, to recouer againe the kingdome of Fraunce, that was altogether lost and out of all hope to become againe French. For saye they, if she had not bene sent of God, the Englishmen after hir death would haue conquered agayne that which they

they had lost. But these men doe not consider the state of the realme of Eng-
 lande: How that after the death of our
 noble king Henry the fifth, the whole
 estate and gouernement of the Realme
 of Fraunce was committed to the no-
 ble Duke of Bedford, who in daede
 all his lyfe time did gouerne the same
 very valyantly to his perpetuall praise,
 rather augementinge the same to the
 Crowne of Englande, then diminishing,
 as in Halls Chronicle at large doth ap-
 peare. But after the death of this wo-
 thy Duke, and the valyaunt Earle of
 Salisbury who was slayne befoze Orle-
 ance, & also of other famous noble men of
 England, ther fel such contention & strife
 in England among the Nobility, and all
 thzough the pryde of the Cardinall that
 then was, that y prouision of the realme
 of Fraunce was left vnprouided, and the
 regent w other noble men of England y
 then were in Fraunce, were faine to re-
 paire home to help to ende controuersies
 & dissentions begun there, thzough which
 negligēce & wāt of foresight, the Dolsphin
 Charles had a great gap left opē to bring
 C.ii. his

The cause
 of the losse
 of Fraunce.

The praise, and

his purpose to effect, and to reconquere againe that which his predecessor Philip and he had lost. And thus thorough ciuill dissentions in England one trouble falling vpon an others necke was the realme of Fraunce lost, which was nobly conquered by king Henry the fifth and valiauntly defended and kept duringe the lyfe of the famous duke of Bedford the kings brother. Thus much thought I good to note by the waye by reason of Ieane y damsel of Fraunce, whose bolde and stoute courage in this enterpryse is much to be wondred at.

¶ What great benefits are happened in the world by the meanes of women,
Cap.8.

It is manifestly knowne vnto all men, vnlesse it bee such as are voyde of knowledge, that the greatest benefite that euer happened to the world is the gifte of sayth: for by sayth wee knowe G D D and comprehend his iudgementes, and this beeing holder for a sure and wonderfull truth, wee must

must necessarylye confesse that women haue bene the cause of the greatest benefites that are amongst men. For this greate and souereigne gyfte was first of all aunounced and declared vnto men by the meanes of women, in that they are the first witnessers of the glorious Resurrection of Christ. And they were not onely the first messengers of this helpe Resurrection, but also it is recorded by certeyne histories that these vertuous and holye women, Mary Magdalen & Martha, haue preached the Gospell of Christe and conuerted to the Christian fayth the Countrey of Illeria, whiche now is called Scia uonye.

V Women &
first spreaders
abrode
of the resurrection
of Christ.

And we read in the olde Chronicles of Englande that Glotaira the wife of kinge Egilbert dyd instruct hir husband the kinge in the Christian fayth. In such manner that when Augustine dyd come from Rome to preach the Christian fayth the people of Englande were sone conuerted and turned from the error of Pelagius, wherewith the whole realme was infected.

How Egilbert king of
England receiued the
first taste of
Christian
faith, by the
meanes of
his wyfe.

The praise, and

Hermegides king of Goths being infected with the heresye of Arrius, was conuerted and dzawne from it vnto the faith of Christ by the meanes of Nigegond his wife, as Gawyn doth witnesse in his second booke.

In like māner Cleotilda the Quēene of Faunce and wife vnto king Clouis, thozow hir prayer and gentell intercession, hir husbände did renounce his Paganisme and became a Christian, with whome all the subiectes of his Realme receiued þ faith of Iesus Christ, and al came by the meanes of the Quēene vnto whome the inhabitaunce of that kingedome are much bounde.

The like benefite receiued the Gothes in times past, by the meanes of a wise and sober Quēene named Iugulda, who by hir instant prayers and vertuous demonstrations and perswasions vnto the King hir husbanoe, he leste his olde errors and became a Christian.

In reading of histories we find many examples of men that haue done greate woorks of vertue, thozow þ meritorious working

wozking of their wines, as Domitian, Flavius, Cæsar, & others that the curious reader may see in Plutarch & Bocace, the which haue at large described the vertues of illustrious womenne; and the greate benefittes that are come to the woꝛlde thzough their meanes, without whome men shoulde decaye and fayle, and the woꝛld shoulde perishe and altogether consume, if it were not by them encreased and repaired. And in this onely thing are all other benefits comprehended and contained, that may bee imagined or wished, so that Mercury Trimegest knowing the great perfections and graces of women, hath left in wishing, that that man is greatly to be abhorred that hath no wife.

And god himselfe as you may read in Genesis commaunded the Patriarch Abraham that he shoulde hearken and doe all that his good wife Sara did saye vnto him. Gen. xi.

But seeinge y^e we are entred into this matter, touching y^e great benefits y^e are hapned in y^e woꝛld by y^e means of womē, let

The praise, and

vs which haue receiued the same benefite (through the lyke meanes) much moze abundantly then euer did any other Nation that euer was hearde or knowne since the foundation of the worlde, consider the same moze exactly.

For what Nation may say that they haue receiued the worde of God and the glad tidings of the Gospell so plentifully and with such continuance of time, as this Realme of England, and al through the godly zeale of our blessed and gracious Queene Elizabeth. What Nation hath expelled and rooted out Papistrie, and quite defaced al monuments and occasions of Idolatrie as she hath done. What Nation hath wounded that great Beast and Monster of Babilon so sore as she hath done.

What Nation hath stayed ciuell tumults and suppressed rebellions, with lesse bloodshedde then she hath done.

What nation hath auoided the practises, conspiracies and counsayles of soeyne Princes & Kings against this Realme, as she hath done.

¶ **Pea**

Pea, what Nation hath lyued in
such tranquyltie and peace, so long as
we vnder hir, haue done.

What Prince or Potentate hath ruled
with such pitie and clemencie towardes
hir very enemyes, as she hath done.

What Prince hath had such a care and
zeale to Gods worde and to the main-
tenaunce thereof as she hath had, or
what Prince or Potentate hath hadde
such a heartie loue and affection toward
their subiectes, or moze carefull to
maynteine and keepe them in peace, as
she from tunc to tunc, hath hadde and
bene.

Therefore to conclude, all the bene-
fites that euer happened in the world
through women, is not to be compared
to this onely benefitte of ours (cleane
contrary to the desire and expectation of
our enemyes.

The which benefitte, I beseech
God long to continue amongst vs.

Amen.

E.v.

OF

The praise, and

Of the most excellent knowledge
of some women the which in lear-
ning & wisdom, haue far excel-
led diuerse graue & wise Philo-
sophers. Cap. 9.

Not onely men haue bene wonder-
full curious and desirous throug-
their great studie & knowledge in lear-
ning to make their name and fame im-
mortall. But also innumerable women,
haue giuen themselves to the know-
ledge and studie of learning, by reading
and meditating booke so profoundlye,
that they haue not onely made them-
selves equall to many learned men, but
also in all kinde of knowledge and lear-
ning, they haue excelled the most lear-
ned and famous philosophers that were
lyuing in their times or dayes.

Of Sables And because that the Sybels haue
bene most excellent and famous in
knowledge and wisdom of all those of
auncient memoꝝ: I will first beginne to
speake

speake of them.

But knowing that Lactantius, Eusebius, Saint Hierome, Horace, and other learned personages haue much better and moze learnedly wzitten of them in their woꝝkes and hystoꝛyes then I can, therefore I will not stande long to shew many examples vpon the matter.

Now these Sybels were tenne in number, but among them there were two moze famous then the rest, that is to witte, Sybel Cumania, and Sybel Eritræa.

But here you must note that Sybel is not the name of a woman, but it doth signifie in our language a Diuineresse or Prophetesse.

They were lyuing in the time of the holy Fathers, and being instructed and taught in al wisdom and godly knowledge of the Elders, they leste in wziting diuerse & sundry sentences and sayings, touching the ende of the woꝛld, of the Iudgement, and of the eternall lyfe.

Furthermoze they haue spoken & prophesied

The praise, and

**The Sybels
Prophecies**

phered of our Saviour Iesus Christ, also of the estate of worldly things, of kingdoms and countrys and other such like matters, in darke and hidden misteryes, like to y^e bookes of y^e Reuelations, vnto which bookes of theirs, the auncient Romaines, had alwayes their recourse in all their affaires and necessities, and dyd conferre vppon them as witnesseth Cicero in the second booke of Diuination, and he sayde that of the Capitall letters of their verses, were taken out graine sentences and good words. And their bookes were in such credit and estimation that when any man had sayd, it is the word of Sybel, or Sybel hath spoken it, it was as much as if we should now say, it is as true as the Gospell.

I read that vppon a time, an olde woman and vnknown came vnto Tarquin the proude, and offered vnto him nine bookes to sel, y^e which she sayd contained the Oracles of their Gods, Tarquin demanded the price, & she said three hundred pæces of golde, wherewith Tarquin did laugh and mocked hir, as though she had doated for age.

The

The which the olde woman perceiuing,
cast thre of them into the fire and bur-
ned them. And againe asked proude Tar-
quine if y he would buy y other fire that
remayned without demynishing any part
of the prce, whereat he laughed againe
vneasurablie, and that perceiuing the
olde woman, she burned thre moze of
the saide fire bookes remaining, and a-
gaine asked him if that he would buy
the other thre that were left, for so
much golde as she asked for the nyne.
Then Tarquin considering with himself
the constancie of y woman, he bought the
thre bookes that were left, and gaue hir
so much golde as the nyne shoulde haue
cost him, but after that she was ne-
uer seene moze. And these thre bookes,
were kept in a secrete place, and there
was fiftene men appointed and cho-
sen, vnto whom the custodie and keeping
of these bookes were committed and
giuen.

After these Sybels the Quene of Sa-
ba, whom some call Nicaula and others
Manqueda, is worthy and doth merite
the first place in reputation and know-
ledge

The prayse, and

The queen
of Saba
most excel
lent in
knowledg

g. kings. ca 10

Math. II.

ledge, whose ardent zeale and desire was
such in the obtaining and conquering a
Treasure of sapience, that the scripture
giueth hir an immortall praise, for that
she came from the confines and utter-
most partes of the world into the lande
of Iudea to heare the wisdom of Solo-
mon, with whom she did dispute most
profoundly, from the Euphrate vnto the Ce-
lestiall, that is to say from the least heere vnto
the most highest tree of Libanus, that
in disputing and putting forth questions
she might know the property and nature
of herbes and trees.

Dama,

The doctrine of Pythagoras had neuer
beene knowne, because of the obscuritie
thereof, if that Dama, his daughter had
not kept scholl after the decease of hir fa-
ther and did interpret it.

Arreta,

Arreta did so excell in knowledge
that she required no doctour to instructe
hir sonne Aristippus, but she hir selfe
did teach and instruct him in the doctrine
of Philosophie, for the which cause her
was called Matrodidactus, that is to say
taught of his mother. Hortencia daugh-
ter vnto that famous Plato, Hortensi-

Hortensia.

us,

us, was so wonderful in knowledge, that after she had made an eloquent Oration befoze the Senators, hir posteritie had hir in wonderfull admiration, not onely bicause of hir facunditie and excellencie, but also for that she should be a spectacle to be imitated and followed.

Corrinna had such excellent knowledge in poesye and making verse, that there in she excelled the famous Poet Pindarus, in the which kinde of verse Theano was as well sene as Corrinna, And Socrates was not ashamed openly to confesse that he had learned many good things of the learned Aspasia. Leoncea overcame in disputation and reasons the Philosopher Theophrastus. Platoes schoole was defended and forbidden to women and maydes: But neuerthelesse, Laschenea and Axiothia leste not to frequent and haunt it in mens apparel.

Cornelia wife vnto Scipio Affricanus was so excellent in knowledge that she left vnto hir posteritie many good and eloquent Epistles, So did Cornescia many verses that she had made.

Caria Affrania, did so well profite in the

Corrinna

Theano

Aspasia.
Leoncea.

Laschenea.
Axiothia.

Cornelia

Cornescia.

Caria.
Affrania.

The prayse, and

Lib. 6. ca 6

Mammea.

Teclea.

the ciuill lawe, that forsaking hir distaffe and spindle, she pleaded very learnedly, many causes befoze the conscript fathers and Senators. Diodore the Sicilian had five wonderfull Daughters both in knowledge and maydenly shamefastnesse. But nowe to come to Christian Women, Eusebius in his Ecclesiasticall hystorie sheweth that Mammea, mother vnto the Emperour Alexander Seuerus, did so much esteeme knowledge and had it in such price, that vnderstanding the fame of the renowned vessel of erudition Origen: She sent certain notable personages of hir court to Antioche, where as then he dwelled, whom she besought with all submission that it would please him to take the paines to come to hir for to instruct hir in the worde of God, and that she had an vnspeakeable desire and an vncredible zeale to see him and to heare his voyce. Teclea was Saint Pauls Disciple, full of knowledge and vnderstanding, & Saint Katherine a Virgine of Alexandria of most holy life, did overcome fiftie Philosophers with hir doctrine and wisdom.

The

The foure daughters of Saint Philip the Apostle, and Ammia, were Prophetesses of the new Testament in y^e Church of Philodelphia.

Ammia.
Eusebius. li.
5. cap. 17.

In the dayes of Saint Hierome, the world did abound with women of great knowledge and vnderstanding, and also, with great eloquence, vnto the which he did write and dedicate many good and wholsome Epistles, as to Eustochia, Paulia, Gerencia, Fabiola, Furia, Marcellia, Demetriade, Siluia, and many others.

Eupochia wife vnto the Emperour Theodosia, was not onely in great reputation and fame because of the gloze of hir empyre, but also she was wonderful greatly esteemed for the high knowledge and wisdom above all the rest in hir time: In whose daies, ther wer such store of women endued with wisdom & knowledge, that Origen himselfe that famous Clarke, had y^e help of seuen Virgins in y^e composition of his booke, the which Virgins serued to be his secretaries to write that, which he composed and made continually, & he himselfe could not furnish nor accomplish his workes without the

Origen had
seuen vir-
gins to his
secretaries,
to write y^e
composition
of his
workes.
Euse. lib. 6
cap. 17.

The praise, and

ayde & helpe of these sayd damfels & vir-
gins. Now for all that the world in those
dayes was so well replenished with so
great a number of learned women, that
were very eloquent and wise, we must not
therefoze thinke that this our age is left
desolate and beide, for thanked be God,
there is found a number that in no point
shal giue place to those of times past. But
if things be wayed in an equal ballance,
it will be found, that they haue not onely
bene equall, but also by long distaunce &
continuaunce they haue excelled, & which
pretending to describe any thing, haue not
vsed & meane of a Secretary, as those in
times past, for to set forth by writing the
subtill inuentions of their mindes. For
who can finde in al & auncient memo-
rie, any woman were she neuer so full of
knowledge, that might be compared, into
the Lady Margaret Vallois, Queene of
Nauara, and onely sister to Fraunces the
French king, the first of that name: whose
name & fame, shal for euer remaine in the
memozy of men, & honored in the mouth
of the wise perpetually, bicause of the em-
minent knowledge and herosical vertues,
where.

The Ladie
Margaret
Vallois
queene of
Nauarra,

wherewith she was endued & enriched,
 through the great grace of God, farre a-
 boue all other Ladyes & princelies in hir
 time. Either what Cornelia or Cornes-
 cia, may be compared to y^e Lady Helis-
 an of Crennes a French gentlewoman, for
 what Philosopher could more learnedly
 haue set to their hand to their pen the she
 hath done, & as doth appeare by y^e goodly
 woorkes y^e she hath left vs in great num-
 ber. But I will leaue many examples of
 diuers other ladyes and gentlewomen of
 that realme, y^e which in knowledge haue
 excelled & in humaine sciences, not onely
 women but also most men in their daies.
 For to come vnto Christian de Pisa, a
 gentlewoman of Italy, y^e which may take
 the first degree among all the wise womē
 that euer I read or heard of. Wher neuer
 was known any, were they neuer so wel
 learned, y^e by any means might be compa-
 red to hir, in y^e respect of fair wyting, & en-
 diting, in y^e which she so far excelled, y^e she
 made many learned personages ashamed
 that durst not take pen in hand to cōter-
 naile hir doings, so far was she endued wth
 diuine graces, aboue al those y^e haue take

Helisana
 of Crennes
 a French
 gentlewoman.

Christian
 de Pisa an
 Italian gen-
 tlewoman.

The praise, and

in hand to exercise to write faire. And hee
þ wil not credit nor beleue my sayinge,
let him reade hir woꝝkes and hee shall
finde that neuer person hath sought out
moze lyuely the laudes and prayes with
the excellent vertues & qualities of wo-
men, nor one þ hath better answered vnto
the objections that þ defamers of fe-
minine kinde can object, then she hath
done. I dare boldly say moze learnedly
the any other authoꝝ þ hath written of þ
like matter. But foꝝ all this, Duema Lu-
gia, a gentlewoman of Spaine, meriteth not
lesse commendations & praise then Chri-
stianna de Pisa, because of the great & per-
fect knowledge wherewith she was most
richly endued, farre aboue anye other of
that nation. Foꝝ she being one of the la-
dyes of hoznoꝝ belonging to the Ladye
Mary, sister vnto the king of Portingal, &
of years not aboue twelue. She shewed
before the Pope Paule, the thirde of that
name, in þ yeaꝝe. 1548. what knowledge
and learning she was indued with. In
writing vnto him most learnedly, in
fue sundꝝ languages: that is to wit, in
Hebrew, Greeke, Latin, Chaldean, & in þ
Arabian

Duema Li-
gua a Spa-
nish Ladie.

Arabian tongue: So that the Pope for all his learninge was faine to seeke interpreters to declare & expound his letters. And in the same time flourished at Rome an other Spanish Lady named Isabel Rosera, the which made profession to read & expound the hard and difficulte works in Latin of Lescot, whō the Fryers call the subtile Doctor. And to his lecture & auditoꝝ came many prelates and Cardinals of name, to heare him.

Isabel Rosera.

The foure daughters of Ferdinand do, king of Aragon, and of Dame Isabel of Castillia his wife, are no lesse worthy of praise for their wisdom and understandinge, of which daughters, two of them were Quēenes of Portingal, an other was maryed to Philip Duke of Austria, & the fourth was married to the worthy and famous Prince, king Henry the eight, named Quēene Katherine, and Mother to Quēene Mary, all the which foure daughters were so well learned y many times they have ben seene to talke w diuers embassadoꝝ in y latin tongue. And amongst these we may put diuers ladyes and gentlewomen of this realme

The vvise: dome and knowledg of the foure Daughters of the king of Aragon.

The praise, and

whose learning & knowledge in y^e Greek
& Latin tongues, haue farre excelled these
befoze named, as y^e good & vertuous La-
dy Ieane dy Ieane with many others whō I could
name, which for y^e I wil not be tedious, I
ouerpasse. But aboue all these befoze na-
med, let our gracious quēne & souereigne
lady step into place, whose wonderfull
knowledge & learning doth superabound
and passe all those befoze named: So that
without any comparison or equalitie, she
is the rare Phoenix that hath bene & is
at this present to be found. For what prince
was euer heard off, so wel Ieane in so ma-
ny sundry languages, as Latin, Greeke,
Hebrew, French, Dutch, Spanish, Italian.
Insomuch y^e she is able to question & rea-
son in any of y^e sayd, to any forreine en-
bassadoz or other with such modesty, and
so profoundly, that it is wonderfull vnto
straungers to heare the same. Therefore
these fewe examples of the great know-
ledge of women shall suffice at this pre-
sent, that we may come to speake of o-
ther their vertues and perfections y^e are
of no lesse price then the knowledge, but
rather more required and more to bee
prayed

Lady Ieane

The vvise
dome and
knowvledge
of our
Queene Eli-
zabeth.

prayed in them.

¶ Of the chastitie of some women,
a chiefe vertue required in them.

Cap. Io.

So, even as among vices, some are dishonest and others most execrable and abominable, also among vertues, some are more commendable and more worthy of praise then the rest. As chastitie which in a woman is the most soueraigne and chiefest Jewell of all other vertues: For although a woman want beautie, knowledge, eloquence, riches, kindred, friends, or any other sauour, wherewith nature may furnish a woman to make hir perfect, yet, if she be chaste, all shall do well with hir: but if this vertue faile, she be wanting, although she haue all other perfections she may be attributed vnto hir, it is to no effect, but she shall be as a withered flower, without any estimation or value, for chastitie being once lost, all other vertues are quenched in hir. Hereof speaketh Xenocrates the philosopher, saying: chastitie is the proper Element for women,

Chastitie is
the chiefest
vertue in a
woman.

The notable
saying
of xenocra-
tes.

ff. iiii.

even

The praise, and

euē as the water is for fishes, and the
ayre for foules and birdes.

The chasti-
tie of Lu-
cretia.

Also Lucretia sayde, that a woman
can haue no pleasure nor ioy in y^e world,
hir chastitie being once vyolated and bzo-
ken, the which wordes shee spake not
in vaine, but ratified and confirmed the
same by the shedding of hir bloud, after
that she had bene most outragiously for-
ced and vyolated by proude Tarquin.

Susanna a
mirrour &
example of
chasterie to
all ladies.
Dan. 13.

But a Chyistian woman hath not a
better glasse before hir eyes nor a better
example of chastitie, then of that famous
and chaste Lady Susanna, which had ra-
ther incurre the perill and danger of
hir lyfe then to yelde or consent unto the
filthy desires and lusts of two lecherous
olde men, being so farre stricken in yeares
that euery howe death, the earth, and
the very wormes, did as it were adioyne
and summon them to appeare before the
most fearefull and terrible Iudgement
seat of God.

Notwithstanding as it were in de-
spight of their yeares, they loosed the
bridell, and gaue place to their inconti-
nencie, setting their heartes on fire, and
without

without all feare of the Iudgements of God, they did require hir of loue, and pricked with vnnaturall flames, they soughte to defile hir honour, but all in vayne, for they could not preuaile. And surely in my minde, I wish that all those that giue themselves in pray to vnlawfull loue, and that are to lyberall of their honour, had in steede of Tablets and Pomanders that hang before them, this picture and looking glasse of chastitie wel printed and engraued in their hearts, to the ende that they might moze constantly and moze vertuously resist their foolish and disordinate desires.

Now although y the chastitie of this holy Lady, is an example of most annient memozy, yet neuerthelesse y honest & comendable pudicitie & chastitie of Alice the Countesse of Salisbury, doth merit no lesse prayse but rather worthy to be had in perpetuall memozy during all ages.

The countesse of Salisbury a right mirror of chastitie vvhose story was written by the Countesse of Salisbury.

Who perceiuing the King Edward the first of that name, to burne in vnlawfull lust towards hir, & that his pretence was to rauthe hir honour, prouoking hir,

J. b.

day

The praise, and

day by day to his disordinate desire, and also that those of his courte (hauing no other respect but to please his humeur) gaue him counsell that if she of hir good will would not consent & yeld to his request, that he should take hir and compell hir perforce, and so vse his power and royall authoritie.

After which counsell he sent for the sayd Countesse, thinking to abuse hir according to his pleasure, and she seeing hir selfe in most extreme daunger, being perplexed and destitute of all helpe, and fearing to be hyolated, she fell down at the kings fete shewing and declaring vnto him with a pitifull voyce and with pouring forth plentie of teares, & saying that hir unhappy fortune and harde destinye had brought hir thether into that place, before his presence, as the innocent Lambe committed to the Sacrifice, she desired him most humbly to graunt vnto hir one request that she would make.

The countesse
of Salisburie
requesteth
of the king.

Wherewith the King being right ioyfull and glad, did sweare vnto hir by the Sacrament of Baptisme, the which
he

he had taken, that shee shoulde not bee sayde nay in any thing that was in his power, yea if it were his Crowne and Scepter she should haue it.

Then the chaste & good Lady, did shew him a great knife y she pulled out wher she had hidden it vnder hir gowne, saying vnto him, that the gifte that she requested, and for the which he had giuen and bounde his faith was, that she did most humbly desire his grace, rather then to take away hir honour, that he would first take his sword and so ende hir lyfe, or els to suffer hir with that knife that she had brought (of purpose) to kill hir selfe, to the ende, that hir innocent blood might beare witnesse befoze God of hir vndefiled chastitie.

The King perceiuing y inuincible chastitie & constancie of this vertuous lady, was vanquished and overcome with a great remoyce of conscience.

And somewhat to requite and rewarde the wrong and iniurie that he had offered vnto hir, in recompence of hir honest chastitie, he did consent to take hir vnto his lawfull wife, & so he made hir

Quene

The praise, and

Queene of Englande . By this may be
seene how well god doth recompence the
good wills of those that put theselues in
perill of their lynes rather then they wil
seeme to offende him.

The chastite
of queen
Elizabeth
wife to
King Ed.
ward the 4

The lyke also came to passe in the
dayes of King Edward the fourth by the
Lady Elizabeth Gray, beeing a widow,
and making sute vnto the king for cer-
teine landes which did belong vnto hir
late husband and were wrongfully kept
from hir: The king beeing a Prince
somewhat subject vnto the pleasures of
the world, and carnally bent, did bryge
this good & vertuous Lady to make spoile
of hir chastitie, promising to graunt hir
request, if she would suffer him to haue
his fleshy desire, but as she would in no
wise graunt hir request (for all that he
gane hir many faire words and promi-
sed hir mariage if she would graunt it
him: So she at the last made him this
answere,

That as she was farre vnmete to
be the Kings married wife by reason of
hir base degrees and parentage: So
lykewise she thoughte hir selfe to
god

god to be a kings concubyne, and there-
 fore she desired his grace to vnye hir no
 moze in such matters for his labour was
 in vaine. The king perceiuing that she
 was fully bent to keepe hir honour vnde-
 filed & that he had tryed hir and founde
 his labour to be vaine, thought hir moze
 fit to be a princes peere and so toke hir
 to his wife and made hir a Quene, con-
 trary to the will of the nobilitie for that
 they iudged hir to base being a knightes
 widowe to match in mariage with a
 Prince and Potentate thowowe which
 was fought a cruell battell by the Earle
 of Warwicke, but the victorie remayned
 to the king, as by the sequell of the story
 doth appeare.

Eusebius rehearseth that the tyraunt
 Maxentius set by those y were ministers
 of his fleshy desires, for a certaine Lady
 of Rome named Sophronia for to abuse
 hir at his owne will and pleasure.

Lib. 8. ca. 17
 Of his Ec-
 clestasticall
 historie.

But she declared the whole matter to
 hir husband, and he casting forth a great
 sigh saide, that he must either suffer and
 abide that shame and dishonour, or else
 prepare himselfe to receiue death. She se-
 ing

The prayse, and

ing that hir husband for to a boyd death
was content to giue hir honestie as a
pray vnto the tyrant, she did very wisely
dissemble hir grieve & saide vnto h^r tyrants
seruants that were come to fetch hir.
My masters I pray you to stay a while
vntill that I may haue time to prepare
my selfe in my gorgeous attyre and best
apparel, to shewe my selfe more comely
before the presence of the Emperours
maiestie, the which they willingly grau-
ted: And she went into hir chamber, and
fell vpon hir knees praying and reque-
sting God to helpe hir, and minding to
make a sacrifice of hir life, offering vnto
him the chastitie of hir heart, she tooke a
knife wherewith she strake hir selfe in-
to the stomake, and in this manner
she gaue vp the ghoast, with hir chaste-
tie undefiled. In lyke manner the
same Eusebius writing of a certeine per-
secution that was made in Alexandria
and Antioche, he sheweth a hystorie of
a vertuous Ladie that fel into the hands
of those that persecuted the Christians.
She perceiuing both hir selfe and two
of hir Daughters to be in extreme dan-
ger

Sophronia
killed hir
selfe for feare
so be defiled

Lib. 8. c. 12

ger to be rauished and deflowered, the desired leaue of hir keepers that thee might goe to ease nature, the which they graunted hir, for both naturall shame and reuerence constrayned them to giue hir that respite.

Then the good Lady perceiving that she was nere vnto a riuer, and hauing sufficient occasion to saue hir honestie, she cast hir selfe into the riuer, and hir two daughters after hir, to saue their chastitie. And lykewise two other virgins very yong of yeares cast themselues into the Sea, for to keepe themselues from being rauished.

And not onely Christian women haue preserved & kept their chastitie and integritie with the perill of their lyues, but also there is found an infinite number of heathen women, that had rather lose their lyues then their honestie. Among the which Nicas a Virgin of excellent beautie and of wonderfull fauour, may take the first place, for she chose rather to dye holding & embracing the knees of hir father Philodion, then to consent to the unmesurable desire of a wicked tyrant, & would

A matrone
of Rome,
drownd
hir selfe for
feare to be
violated.

Nicas
Plutarke.

The praise, and

An exam-
ple of a ves-
tal virgin
that put out
hir owne
eyes.

would haue raniſhed hir. And vpon a
time a certein prince thought to haue car-
ried away one of the Meſſall Virgins to
haue abuſed hir at his pleaſure, becauſe
that ſhe was indued with a ſingular
beautie and of a comely grace, but ſhe put
out hir owne eyes, for that ſhe harde ſay
that the diſordinate affection of this
prince, came thoroꝝ the viewe and be-
holding of hir faire eyes and gracions
countenaunce.

the virgins
Lucrines.

Saint Hierom diſputing againſt Iouini-
an, doth rehearſe many memoꝝiall exam-
ples of women that haue bene famous
thoroꝝ their owne ſhamefaſtneſſe and
chaſtitie, as þ virgyns Lucrines. þ from
yeare to yeare were ſent in pilgrimage
into the countrie of Troy, the which con-
tinued ſo by ſucceſſion þ ſpace of a thou-
ſand yeares, without any ill talke of
them oꝝ any ſiniſter occaſion to ſuſpect
the honour and chaſtitie of any of them.

Cleobulina

In like manner Cleobulina Daughte
vnto one of the ſeven wiſe Maſters, li-
ued ſo vertuouſly, that ſhe had in diſdaine
al Venus pleaſures, and remayned al hir
life long a Virgine.

After

After y^e the thirtie tyzats of Athens had murdered & spoyled one named Pheodon in his hal, they made his daughters being virgins to come forth and daunce vpon y^e pavement which was still blouded with the slaughter of their father, but they fayning to goe and make water, did throw themselues headlonge into a well for to keepe and preserve their virginitie, even vntill death. Fiftie virgins of Lacedemonia, that the Messenians thought to haue defloured, hauing them in their power, did rather chouse to dye willingly, then to consent to such villanny, for y^e which after ward, followed great and cruell warre.

The chastitie of the daughters of Pheodon.

Fifty virgins of Lacedemonia.

And the Captaine Aristomenes a Messenian, hauing obtained victoꝝy of the Lacedemonias, caried away twelue virgins that he had taken at the nocturnall sacrifices which were called Hyacinthens, and as Aristomenes Souldyers were about to force and to doe wronge to these virgins, hee withstode them from doing such iniurye, and killed some of them that would not forbear from doing violence to the sayde virgins.

Aristomenes kept twelue virgins very diligently fro rape.

C.

These

The praise, and

A recom-
pence made
to y^e saide
Aristome-
nes.

The which virgins beeing afterwarde redeemed by their parents and set at libertye, hauing in remembrance the great benefits that Aristomenes had done vnto the, they would by no meanes returne into their Countrey, vntill that vpon their knees they had gotten pardon and forgiveness of the Iudges, before whom Aristomenes was afterwarde accused, and they declared that he onely had ben the protector and defender of their virginities.

The request
of three hundred
Macedonians
to the
consul Marius.

The lyke Saint Hierome and Oroseus rehearseth for a thing to be remembered, that after the overthrowe of the Ambroyans & Tygurins, a people of Prouince, their wiues hauinge knowledge and woode that the battayle was lost, and that they shoulde be deliuered into seruitude and thraldome, and become Concubines vnto the Romaines that were the conquerours, three hundred of the most noblest and of highest parentage, dyd present themselves before the consull Marius, making to him this request, that if he woulde haue them aliue, that it may be lawfull for them to keepe

keepe their chastitie, and that this might be, that it would please him to assigne them place in the service of the vestall virgins, or that they might be sent backe to the Temple of Ceres, the which for that they coulde not obtaine nor haue graunted, they killed all their younge children, and the next daye they were all founde dead, and had killed one another.

Seuen Milesian virgins perceiuing The Milesian virgins that the fury of the Gaulls had spoyled & wasted all, and fearing to be rauished, they loued rather to lose their liues then their virginittie. And a virgin of Thebes, A virgin of Thebes. being against hir will defleured by a Macedonian, dyd for a time dissemble hir grieffe, vntill such time as shee founde oportunitie to be reuenged, and findinge occasion taking the rauisher of hir virginity on a time a slepe, she killed him, and afterwarde killed hir selfe, hauinge no desire to liue anye longer, hir chastitie beinge once lost, the whiche shee woulde not doe, vntill that shee hadde taken vengeance of him that had spoyled hir of hir maydenheade.

G.ii.

Chionimetria

The praise, and

Chiometria
killed him
that had as-
bused hir.
Plutarche
in his booke
of Illustrious
women.

Chiometria wife vnto Ortagantes, being taken in warre was forced by a Tribune, but certaine tyme after shee was put to ransome, the whiche was brought to hir by hir parentes and friends, & when she was deliuered, the Tribune did keepe hir company part of the way. But as he would haue taken his leaue to departe, shee made a secrete signe to one of hir seruants to cut off his heade, that did profer to kisse hir, the which was executed by him to whome she made the signe. Then Chiometria toke the heade and brought it home to hir house, and being there she cast it down at hir husbands fete, for the which fact hir husbände did reprove hir very sharply, saying, that faith ought to bee kept euen to our very enimie: To the which she answered, that it was a thing most commendable and honest to keepe faith and promise. But yet much more honest was this that he alone was lyuing of all those that had lyen with hir.

After that þe tyrant Aristotin was put to death, by the meanes and worthynesse of

of Megisthonne a most valyaunt & courageous woman. The sayde Tyrantes house was put to the spoyle, and two of his daughters of right excellent beautie were taken, the which the Souldyers would haue defiled and spoiled of their virginittie before they should be killed.

Megisthonne
ne a coura
gious yow
man.

The which Megisthonne perceiuings, toke them away from out of their habes, declaring vnto them, that if they did such a fact it should be vnto their reproch for euer. By whose perswasions these daughters of this tyrant Aristotin were permitted to kill themselves wth their owne handes, beeing in their owne choise what death they would dye. And to the ende they shoulde so doe, they were put both together in a chamber. When the eldest who neither in word nor countenance shewed any feare of death, took hir girdell, and made it fast to a balke or beame of woode, for to hang hir selfe, exhorting hir sister with a manly courage to doe the lyke. But the yongest taking hir sister by the hande, did praye hir to suffer hir to dye the first, and the eldest answered, my truste and wel-

G. iij.

beloued

The praise, and

The pitiful
death of
two sisters

beloued sister, euen as hether to we haue
lyued and loued lyke sisters, I haue not
denyed thee in any one thing, euen so
now I am ready to yelde and graunt to
thy request at this last hower, that is,
that I will out lyue thee, although it
will be vnto me a great grieve to see thee
dye. This talke being ended the
youngest sister tooke hir gyrdell, and
fastening it about hir throte therewith
she hanged hir selfe, hir eldest sister af-
ter she was deade tooke hir downe, and
covered hir so well as she coude possible.
And then turning hir selfe to Meggith-
one, she prayed hir that after hir death
she woulde not suffer their bodies to re-
maine naked vpon the earth, but that
they might be covered and not seene na-
ked, and after these wordes she hanged
hirselle as hir sister had done.

The greates
disastri of
the Melis-
sian virgins

¶ We reade of the Melissian virgins
the which for no meanes nor wayes
could be kept from hanging themselues,
the which some think came by a straunge
disease of a corrupted minde, from the
which doing y cause could not be known
nor the remedie founde, but that it was

a fantastickall contagion proceeding of the infection of the ayze that moued them therevnto, being as it were beside themselves enduced and ledde therevnto by some wicked spirite, for the which as I saide no remedy coulde be founde by no counsell, vntill that by the good aduise & counsell of one that founde a meanes to haue a law and statute published, to strip all those starke naked that so had hang-ed themselves after their death, and to frayne their naked bodies through the streetes to the open sholue of the people.

Through which polyticke lawe and constitution there came such efficacie that very shame and dishonour that their bodies shoulde bee trayned naked and seene, brought such vertue, that from thenceforth they ceased to hang themselves any moze.

Who woulde not meruayle of the pudicitie and shame of Heathen Virgins, the which contemned and despised death, but feare and shamefastnesse, they hadde in most highe reuerence.

The praise, and

In a certaine battaile of Theſſalia, the husbands enclosed their wiues & daughters with ſagots, ſtraw & dyve wood, to the ende that if the men were overcome in battaile, the wood and ſtraw ſhould be ſet on fire, & ſo their wiues and daughters to be conſumed and burnt, to the which the women and virgins did willingly conſent and agree for the preſervation of their chaſtite, and they did greatly commend and prayſe thoſe that invented this deuile. Neuertheleſſe in the ende their husbands got the victory through the meanes and vertue of ſo honeſt and good wiues.

A wiſe and
ſevere of a
Lacanian
Ladie to an
Amorous
gentleman
that vrged
hir

A Lacanian Lady, being requested and deſired by a young Gentleman, of ſolliſh loue, he answered: If you did require of me that which belongeth to me and is mine; I might peradventure doe you ſome pleaſure, but the pudicitie that I had being a mayde was in the power and pleaſure of my parents, and now my chaſtite doth belong vnto my husbande, and is in his power, ſo that I cannot nor will not giue, that which you doe ſeake.

In

In reading hystories mention is made <sup>The chaste
tie of Fauna</sup> of Fauna, who was so chaste that neuer man lyuing sawe hir without hir Man: tell but onely hir husbande Faunus. And therefore after hir death she was called the good goddesse, to whose sacrifices neuer man assited, neither durst they haue any similitudes or Images of any man or man childe, for to auoyde all sinister thoughts end euill cogitations.

Likewise Claudia may here be set <sup>The Chaste
tie of Claudia</sup> downe for an example of great chastitie, who being wrongfully accused of impudicitie, & for to testifie & trie hir chastitie, it came to passe that there was found among the Sybels writings, that the Romaines should lende to seeke y^e mother Iddea, the which was put in a shippe, vpon the ryuer of Tyber, but the shippe, flushe so fast in the sande that by no meanes nor by no strength it could be remoued nor haled out.

Then Claudia, being vpon hir knees, <sup>Laſan. lib
2. cap. 8. de
diui. insti
tut.</sup> prayed the goddesse, that if she iudged hir chaste that she would suffer hir to draine the shippe with hir girthe, and by this prayer, by a woman the shippe was re-
C. b. moued,

The praise, and

moved, that all the youth in Rome with
all their strength had no power to remove.

But this fable or hystory written by Lactantius in the seconde booke of heauenly institutions, bringeth to my remembrance an other hystory written by Polydore Virgill in his hystorie of the reigne of England. And he saith that king

A great mi-
racle of a
queene falls
by accusat
of adulterie

Edward the seconde caused Emlin his
mother to be put in prison; who falselly
was accused of adulterie by the Earle
Godwin, who in witness of his cha-
stite, and tryall of his innocentie, went
vpon hot burning coales in the presence
of King & all his nobyltie, saying these
words. Euen so let the fire burne, & con-
tinue me, as I am culpable of this fact,
whereof I am accused, & so she passed tho-
row y^e fire, without any hurt or harme.
By the which it was manifestly known
that wrongfully and without cause they
went about to take away his honour &
good name, the which she had in as great
price and had kept and preserved as his
owne selfe. But I will not end this
matter with one bissoye more, no lesse
wordes fall and draunge then this so

5219m

mer

mer the which is declared by Munsther
in his Cosmographie, and by Crantius
in the Anualls of Almaine, of a vertuo
ous Princeesse named Gunegundia wife
vnto Henry the lame, that was Empe
rour of Rome, who was most falsely ac
cused by a gentleman of hir court to haue
committed adulterie with a knight, but
in tryall of hir honour and honestie, she
went barefooted vpon fire hot barres of
yron without hauing any harme or blem
ish, God preserving hir from daunger,
in token of hir integritie.

A nother
myracle
sheved
vpon Gu
negundia
which was
vniustly ac
cused of a
dultery.
Crantius in
his chroni
cles of Al
mayne.

¶ Of the meruaylous prudencie of some
women.

Cap. II

If those that haue a deliyht & take
pleasure to speake euill and detract
women for to abase their perfection, did
consider y^e vertues wherewith they be in
dued and that are no lesse wonderfull in
them then in men, I suppose they would
chaunge their opinion, and would be as
that Poet who in his verses blaming
Helena the faire, did afterwarde con
uerte his stile to hir prayse, and
greatly

The praise, and

greatly exalted hir in his writings, calling backe & gynesaying that which he had done before, & so as it were made hir an honourable amends. Also I thinke yf y detractors & flaunderers of feminine kind: would more earnestly consider y excellencies of women, they would conuert their detracting & flaundering, to y praise & commendation of y kinde. Now among y vertues wherewith they be alwaies indued, prudence is as it were vnto them a thing naturall, as it appeareth almost by all examples of all histories that are written of them.

Rebecca,
Gen. 27.

For who euer heard of the lyke prudence, as was in Rebecca Isaacs wife for to cause hir sonne Iacob to chayne and get his fathers blessing, the which y father was determined to bestow vpon his eldest sonne Esau. Likewise what prudence y man is found lyke vnto the prudent wit of Abigail of whom the historie saith: That Dauid being in the wilderness of Pharan, sent certeyne of his seruants to Nabal who was a man of great possessions and very rich; to him sent Dauid for vittels, but Nabal being a man

Abigail
1. Kings. ca.
25.

of

of a churlysh nature spake euil of Dauid and his seruaunts saying, that he neither knew them noz their master, and willed them to seeke vittels in some other place. The young men being ashamed returned towarde Dauid and tolde him the churlysh and proude aunswere that Nabal had giuen them, wherewith Dauid being moued (and not without a cause) determined to be reuenged, and willed his seruaunts to girde their swords and followe him, saying: In bayne haue I kept this churles sheepe from perill in the widernesse to be requitted after this manner. But Abigal hauing knowledge what answere Nabal had sent, & how he had refused to giue him and his fode, she most prudently considered y Dauid would therewith be moued and take vengeance; Wherefore she went to meete Dauid and sent him vittells accoording to his request, and excusing the folyshnesse of Nabal, she did most humbly desire Dauid to pardon this faulte, the which he had committed moze for want of wit then of malice. And that thee his poore seruaunt and handmaide had caused to be brought
all

The prudence
of A.
bigal

The praise, and

all such prouisiō as his mē had required. Whereoff Dauid greatly thanked God, that had giuen so wise & so prudent aduise to Abigail, to come befoze & to staye him frō the executing of his wꝛath, or els wold he haue killed Nabal & al his household. By y wise & prudēt saying of a vertuous woman of Thekoa, the same Dauid called again his sonne Absalon from exile. And also god by the counsaile and prouidēce of a wise woman deliuered the citie of Abel, beseged by Ioab, as appeareth in the 20. chapter of the seconde of the Kings. Likewise Ionathas and Ahimaaz were preserued by the prudencie of a woman, that hid them in a well where was no water, & so were they saued from the fury of Absalon and his seruantes that sought them to put them to death. And y same Dauid was saued from the hands of his great enemy king Saul, by y prudencie & wisdoome of Micol his wife, who hauing knowledge that Sauls seruantes were in the countrey for to kill Dauid, she fained that Dauid was in his bed sick, & put an Image couered with Goates skins in his place, & while st that
the

2.kings. ca.
14.

Cap. 20.
Cap. 17.

Micol.
1.king. cap.
20.

the messengers were returned to tel Saul
 y David was sick, Micol let him downe
 throze a window in a basket, & so was
 saued. But we wil leaue the examples of
 the prudence of women in the olde law,
 & speake of those y are of latter memozy.
 And as I iudge ther is no prudence that
 doth passe the prudence of Pulchria, sister
 vnto Theodosius the Emperour of least
 years, who perceiuing hir brother wout
 respect and foresight to seale all kinde of
 letters & commissions y were presented
 vnto him without perusing oz enquiring
 the effect, oz what they did containe, shee
 inuented a pollicie ful of great prudence
 and bybanite, soz to coztrect & reproue that
 fault & imperfection. For by a secretary
 she caused a letter to be made, y contents
 whereoff was, y Eudocia who was wife
 to Theodosius, shold be depriued of liber-
 tie & dignitie, & brought into seruitude &
 bodage, y which letter she presented vnto
 y Emperour hir brother soz to signe, who
 accordyng to his custome signed it presēt
 ly, & did not loke win what the contents
 were, then Pulchria opened y letter, and
 read vnto hir brother what it did containe,
 whereat

The great
 prudence
 of Pulchria

The praise, and

whereat the Emperour was greatly abashed, and this meanes throughte the prudence of his sister, from thence forth he neuer signed letters nor commissions befoze that first he vnderstode the effect and meaning thereof.

Peter Crynnit a French wziter, sheweth and Hormisda being prisoner and finding no meanes to escape, vntill his wife found a politicke inuention, in sending him to the prison a great fish in the belly whereoff there was a fyell, and she sent him word that he himselfe shoulde dresse the fish, and also she sent vnto the keepers of the prison the best wine she could get, by which means he fpyelled off his yrons, and chaunged garment with him that brought the fish, and thus his keepers being druncken, he escaped thorough the prudent inuentio of his wife.

Valerius repeateth a hystory in manner like vnto this, of the Menians, which wer a people of the Iland of Lemos, from whence being chased and driuen by the Pelaskians, they retzyed & fled into Lacedemonia, where they were gently receiued, but after that they were acquainted

The Menians
answaires.

ted with the countrey and with the nature of the people; they practised secretly amonge themselves to erpulse and drive out the Lacedemonians, for the which cause these Meneans were taken prisoners, and whilest they were in prison, their wiues came to visit them, and they chaunging apparell and garments with their husbands, remained themselves in prison, and their husbannes founde the meanes to get out & escape being in their wiues rayment, and so they saved themselves.

The wife of Fernand de Gonzaga, Earle of Castilla, came to visite hir husband in prison, unto whom she gaue hir garment and attyre for to escape & save himselfe, and she toke hir husbands apparell & remained in prison in his steede, puttinge hir selfe in danger for him, whereoff when the kinge of Castil had knowledge, consideringe the prudence of this woman, and hir charitable workings for hir husband, he pardoned them both.

But amongst y^e prudencies wherewith women are imbued, the prudence of the

The praise, and

The history
of Pithias of
Lidia.
Plutarch
in his booke
of illustri-
ous women.

wife of Pithias of Lidia is very wonderfull. For she seeing hir husbände and his seruants, to occupie the most part of the time, and to bestowe it in digginge golde out of the Mines, & bicause of that, husbandry and tilling of the ground was left off & the mines was altogether their exercise, therfore for to correct & reprove this ouersight and couetousnesse in hir husband, she vbled a great prudence worthy of remembzaunce.

For vpon a time when hir husbände was gone to get golde out of his mines, against his retourne, shee caused the table to be spread al of gold, vpon y^e which shee set the similitudes and pictures of all such kinde of meates as shee knewe hir husbände to loue and to delight in, all the which was of cleane golde. Wherewith Pithias dyd delight hym selfe wonderfully for a time, and satisfied his eyes, but his bellye was not therewith satisfied nor filled, so that hee beeing a hungered, commaunded his wife to bring him some meate, then she presented vnto him other shewes and pictures of meate, for to beholde & gaze at,

at, but not for to eate, for being of cleane golde they were too harde to digest whereon when Pithias had longe looked and satisfied his eyes, being weary with the sight thereof, and hauing great hunger, he commaunded againe that they should bring him some meate for he was weary with such sights, the which dyd not fill the stomacke. Then his wife and prudent wife, dyd declare and shew vnto him, that whilest that he was so giuen, to gather together and hoord by golde, his husbande was neglected and layde aside, which would be the cause that both he and his should dye for hunger, if that he dyd continue as he had begun. For by golde a man cannot liue, but by the reuenewes of his land he might wel liue, by improving it to the best value, & that he ought better to esteeme & praise y^e mine of corne, then y^e mine of gold. And thus by this ciuil prudence, she wroth her husband, fro y^e insatiable & couetous desire, & he had to gather gold: so y^e afterwarde he set his minde altogether vpon husbandry & tillage. But if we shal leave speaking of ancient histories, & come to speak of y^e prudence

The praise, and

The prudence
of Mary
countesse of
Flanders.

benty of some of late yeares, wee shall
finde them not inferiour of praise & com-
mendation then the others, but rather
more. Amonge the which, Mary, daugh-
ter vnto the Duke Carrolus Earle of
Flanders and of Alips of Burbon, doth
merite immortall fame: who was wise
vnto the Emperour Maximillian, & was
a man very simple, soft, and pitifull. For
which cause he was disdaind and despi-
sed of his Princes and Lordes, so that
they had rather to communicate the af-
fayres of the Empire vnto the woman,
then to the husband, bicause of his great
prudence and wisdome: but yet notwith-
standing he would neuer take vpon him
to determine vpon the affayres of the
countrey, without the wil and consent of
his husbande, by reason whereoff the
Lordes and the nobilitie had them euer
afterward in honour and reputation.

This Mary countesse of Flanders, and
the Lady Loyse Dutches of Sauoy, that
was mother vnto y French king Fran-
ces, the first of that name, through their
singuler prudence, they entreated the
peace that was made and concluded at
Cambry,

Cambry, whereto also, the Lady Margaret Vallois, Dutcheffe of Allenson, and afterward queene of Nauara, both beare a great praise for concluding that peate: For when the French kinge was taken befoze Pavia, and from thence caried and conueyed to Madril in Spaine, this princess hauing not hir peere nor equall in prudence and knowledge, was sent as Embassadoe into Spaine, vnto the Emperour for the deliuey of the king hir brother. And being argued into Spaine, and come befoze the presence of the Emperour, Charles the fifth, shee offered these few and pithy wordes following, in manner of an Oratton.

Margaret
Vallois
dutchesse of
Allenson.

Hir vwords
to the Empe
ror Charles
the fifth.

Most fortunate Emperour, the very cause why we are come hether, is both to sake and desire peace, and the deliuerance of the king, and this our request is iust & reasonable: For although that god hath giuen thee victorie, and that fortune hath bene so sauiourable vnto thee, as to take the king prisoner in battaille, yet is it not reason that he should continue in captiuitie; as touching his ransom it is ready, & all other things there

V.iii.

vnto

The praise, and
vnto necessary. These words being wisely
ly uttered & knit by with so few words,
was the very occasion that moued the
Emperour afterwarde to yeeld & consent
to peace, although that then hee aun-
swered this Lady somewhat angerly, but
at the last the agreement was made tho-
rough the singuler wisdom & prudence
of these noble Ladies.

¶ Of the wonderfull constancie of some
women, Cap. 12.

GOD the very Authoꝝ of all goodnes,
hath elected, chosen, and appointed the
inferioꝝ and base, and contemned things
of this world, to confound the high and
mighty things thereof, for that whiche
here amongst men is contemned & despi-
sed, is before his maiestie most precious
and acceptable, whose bountifull goodnes
is such, that those things which are fraile
and weake of nature, he thzough his god
grace maketh them most strong and con-
stant, the which thing we doe manifestly
& plainly see in an infinit number of wo-
men, the which although of nature they
be

be most frayle & vnstable, neuertheless
 through the grace and vertue proceeding
 from aboue, they haue bene made moze
 strong and moze constant then the most
 mightiest and strongest men of y^e woꝛld,
 chiefly in vpholding and mainteining the
 christia faith, they haue shewed in them-
 selues, not by any part or lot of tender-
 nesse, or softnesse, as commonly is in wo-
 man kinde, who insomuch as they haue
 the flesh moze softer and delicates, are the
 moze tenderer to suffer or abyde anye
 paine. notwithstanding they haue suffe-
 red moze then men, & through their con-
 stantnesse they haue so ouercome and
 daunted the heartes of Tyzautes, that
 they haue bene sooner weary in putting
 them to martyrdome then they them-
 selues haue bene weary in abiding the
 paine & cruel torments, not regarding y^e
 debilitie & weaknes of their flesh, noꝛ yet
 their yong and tender yeares wherein
 they haue suffred martyrdome, euen as
 constantly as y^e most stoutest & valiantest
 men of y^e woꝛld: for who wil not admire
 & wonder of the meruailous constancie
 and unspeakable patience of Blandina,

The vvon-
 derfull con-
 stancie of
 some womē,
 although of
 nature they
 be most
 traile,

The praise, and

Blasidina
Euseb, in
his ecclesiastical histo-
ry. li. 2. cap.
2. & 3.

This perse-
cution vvas
chiefly in
Lion and in
Doulpnenie

Maxemia
vi. li. 1. of
the persecu-
tion of the
vendals in
3 prouince
of Africa,
about the
yaere 457.

a Christian virgin, who during the per-
secution of the French Church vnder the
Emperour Seuerus, in the yeare of our
Lord. 178. was taken and required to
forsake the Christian faith, but for that
she would not, shee was made fast to a
post for to be deuoured of wilde beasts,
and to be a praye vnto them. Neuerthe-
lesse she shewed no countenance of feare
at all, but the more she was tormented,
the more steadfastly she cryed out that she
was a Christian, praying vnto God con-
tinually, that it would please him to giue
hir constancie to perseuer in confessinge
his name vnto the ende. Insomuch that
the tormentors being wearied with hir
exceeding patience and constancye, were
at the last constrained to cut off hir head,
openly confessing and saying, that they
neuer sawe anye one endure so much
paine with so constant a minde. Maxe-
mia a virgin, after that she had suffered
imprisonment, with scourginges, bea-
tinges, rackings, and other tormentes
for the testimonye of **C H R I S T**
I E S U S, shee did perseuer so con-
stauntly in this holye profession,
that

that season the Vandal that caused hir to be tormented, did confesse that shee had overcome him, and seeing how shee did perseuer in hir profession, and that she could not be perswaded from it, he lette hir to hir owne will, and sent the rest of the prisoners that were kept onely for the profession of Christian Religion, into exile, to Capfus king of the Moores, affirming that he was overcome by Maximia.

In the time that Maximin exercised his horrible crueltie against the poore Christians, he employed his whole deuyght to inuent some newe and vnaccustomed manner of tormentes, but the Christians were more prompt and ready to sustayne them, then he could finde meanes to inuent them, in such manner that he found himselfe not onely vanquished and overcome of men, but also for y^e most part of women which had embraced y^e faith of Christ with such a seruile zeale, y^e when they were apprehended as women, they shewed themselves mightie and stout as men, coneting rather to suffer death, then once to thinke

H. b. to

The praise, and

Dorothee &
Sophronia
Euseb. lib. 9
cap. 37. the
notable de-
cre of Cæ-
sar Maxim-
ian, rehear-
sed by Euse-
bius, lib. 9.
ca. 37. of his
ecclesiastical
call booke

to renounce or forsake the christian faith, among the which was Dorothy, and Sophronia, so constant dames, that Maximian feeling himselfe overcome through their sufferance, he made an Edicte and Decree in the fauour of Christians, after this manner following.

Maximin Cæzar invincible, souereigne and chiefe of Germany, of Aegypt, of Thebes, of Sarmatia, of Persia, and of Armenia, victorious of the Medes, and for his triumphat victories named nineteene times Emperoz, eight times Consul, and Father of the countrey. Since the beginning of our Empire among other things that we determined and concluded to be done, for the benefite of the common weale, we ordeyned, & the order that should be obserued and kept in all things should be confirmable to the auncient lawes, that the publyke disciplyne of Rome should be cōserued. And for this same cause we cōmanded & those & are named Christians, & that haue forsaken our olde and auncient religion, should be constrained to forsake their new doctrine that they haue taken, and obserue our
olde

olde and auncient religion that was established by our predecessors. But hauing intelligence and information that notwithstanding our commaundement and rigour, bled towardes them for to cause them to tourne, they haue not leste to followe their owne will, wherein they are so stable and constant, that there is neither force, nor payne by it neuer so grievous that can withholden them from their religion, to make the to take ours, but they had rather expose & offer themselves to most greuous torments, yea, & also to the death, and thus they continue from day to day, and euē at this present in their constancie, without doing any reuerence and honour to any of our gods in Rome.

The inuincible constancie of Christians

Wherefore hauing in remembrance our accustomed clemencie and pittie, we determine to vse the same towardes Christians.

And for this cause we permitte that from henceforth and hereafter, all manner of personies may make and name themselves Christians, to haue places for their assemblies,

The heathē are suffered to name the selues Christians,

The praise, and

to edifie and buyde Temples wherein they may use their prayers and sacrifices, the which facultie and licence wee do graunt them vpon condition that they shall attempt nothing agaynst our common wealth and religion, and that in all other things they obserue our lawes and constitutions, and also for recogni-
saunce of this permission, they shall be bounde to pray vnto their God for our health and welfare, and for the prosperous estate of the common weale of Rome, to the ende that the common weale being in prosperitie, they themselves may the better lyue of their labour in rest and quietnesse.

By this ordinance and decree, Maximin testifieth that the Christians remained most constant and inuincible in upholding the Christian faith, in the which y^e woman also did persist euen to the last gaspe of their lyfe, so y^e the tyrants being weary of their crueltie were constrained to giue ouer.

Truely, these are the great giftes of GOD, that hath so strengthened the weak^e fragilitie of women that he hath made

made it inuincible,

We read of Appolline a Virgin of Alexandria, being of good yeares, had hir teethe plucked all out by the tormen-
tors, and then was burned quicke, but she was founde more prompt and wil-
lyng to suffer death then the tyrants
were ready to put hir to payne: For so
soone as she saw the fire flame and burn,
she cast hir selfe therein, & this was about
the yeare.251. About which time y god
Lady Corinthia was most shamefully
trayned through the streets & torne in
pieces with an horrible kinde of death.

Appolline.
Euse. lib. 6.

Corinthia

For then the persecution was so sore
kindeled agaynst the poore Christians,
and faithful seruants of Christ Iesus,
that they durst not shewe themselves
openly in the day time, neither in the
Townes nor in the fieldes. For so
soone as any one that professed Christi-
an Religion was seene and espied open-
ly, incontinently the clamor of the peo-
ple was vpon him, and the common peo-
ple would make an uproare, which could
not be pacified untill the poore Christian
was put to death & torne in pieces, euen

The christi-
ans durst
not bee
seene open-
ly Euse. in
his 6. booke
& 31 chap.
of his eccle-
siasticall
historic

The prayse, and

as a Lambe amongst a troupe of
Wolues.

For the Infidells being not satisfied
with the bloud of poore Innocents, en-
tered into their houses and spoiled, wast-
ed and carped away all that they found,
except such things as were of small va-
lue and not worth the taking away, that
they woulde gather together into some
place of the citie and burne it befoze all
the worlde, after that they had pilled and
robbed them of their best goods and rich-
es, but the poore Chzistians endured such
spolyng and robberie ioyfully. And not-
withstanding al this, the feminine kinds
which are reported so frayle and uncon-
stant, leste not to persouer and abyde
most constantly in the Chzistian faith,
showing no countenance of feare. The
which Socrates doth witnes, for he shew-
eth y in Edessa a town in Mesopotamia,
there was a Temple dedicated to Saint
Thomas the Apostle, to the which place
the chzistians came & assembled together
for to pray & call vpon God. The which
their doing, when it came to the know-
ledge of y Emperoꝝ Valens (a cruel en-
my

Socrates in
his 7. booke
cap. 51. of y
ecclesiasti-
cal history.
Tripertite.

thy to the seruants of god, & a great persecutor of the Christians) for this cause he did strike one of his Licutenants named Modestus, because that he had not driuen the Christians from y^e place, knowing that they were the people that he did most detest and abhorre. Modestus did most modestly endure and suffer this iniury, excusing himselfe to the Emperour shewing most dueitfull obedience and submission to his Maiestie, and promised to execute his commaundement.

Who notwithstanding being a man not giuen to bloude, but abhorring and detesting such crueltie, did secretly giue knowledge to the Christians that none of them should be at the Temple y^e day that they had determined to meete together. But notwithstanding this aduertisement & warning, they gaue not ouer their accustomed use in going to y^e Temple to pray, specially y^e day that they wer forbidden. Now Modestus hauing commission to destroy all y^e Christians y^e should be found in y^e said temple, & being in his journey to execute y^e wicked commaundment of Valens according to his commission,

Valens the Emperour gaue a commaundment vnto one of his licutenants named Modestus, to kyll the Christians that resorted to a certaine Temple.

it

The prayse, and

The zeale
of a poore
woman of
the country
for to re-
ceiue Mar-
tyrdome

it chaunced by the way thether, he ouer-
tooke a poore woman that caried a young
childe in hir armes, who was going to
the said Temple, and she made great hast
to be there, to whom Modestus sayde.
Oh unhappy woman, whether runnest
thou so vnadvisedly, she answered him
very boldly, I hast me to the place whe-
ther a greate many others are gone be-
fore, that is vnto the Temple and Con-
gregation of Christians. Why sayd the
Lieutenaut Modestus, hast thou not
heard that the President commeth to kil
& destroy all those that shall be founde in
the sayd Temple, according to the Em-
perours commaundement.

The woman answered him agayne
and sayd . . . I haue heard tell of such a
thing, and that maketh me to make the
more hast to be there in the company of
those that wil assemble themselves ther.
When the President asked hir whether
she caried the lyttle childe, she answer-
ed, I beare it euen to the very same
place for to receiue Martyrdome with
the rest.

Modestus seing the great constancie
of

of that woman, nothing fearing death & the desire that she had to suffer for the name of Jesus, he went back againe, and did not accomplish the thing that he had enterprised to doe, for his presence was utterly to haue destroyed and murdered all the Christians that should be found in the said temple, but he returned to the Emperour Valens, shewing unto him that he would rather suffer death himselfe, then to execute that charge whiche he had giuen him, and he declared to the Emperour all that this pious woman had answered him: in such manner that he turned the Emperours minde from executing so horrible and haynous a fact, & thus was he reuoked & called backe from the crueltie that he thought to haue committed, through the wonderfull constancie and boldnesse of this woman that was willinge with hir childe to receiue martyrdom without any feare of death.

But who euer hearde speake of so stout and noble a heart, as was in Tharua, sister unto Symon the Arch-
bishoppe of Selucia, who by no means

I.

could

Modestus
was letted
from execu-
ting his en-
terprise thro-
ugh the
constancy of
this woman

Tharua.

The praise, and

The inuincible constancie of Tharbua.

The most cruell and pynefull death of Tharbua & hir maide. Historia tripartita. lib. 3 caput. 2

could be perswaded to tourne & reuoke the loue that she had to Christ Jesus hir spouse, neither by prayers, nor by sayre promises, nor yet by any straunge kinde of toymes that were put to hir, but that shee perseuered alwayes, euen vntill the last gaspe of hir breath, in the fayth and Christian religyon, for she being demaunded and asked, whether that she would not follow the religion of hir natural Lord, the king Sapor, she would by no meanes consent therevnto, knowing that the right way to liue, was not to dissemble nor faine, when it was question to speake in the cause and quarell of hir God, the which to mainteine, shee must feare no kinde of toymment, nor not death it selfe, for it was euermore death to deny Christ to the worlde. And thus shee perseuered in this holy minde, euen to suffer death, yea, the most cruelllest that might be deuised. For shee with a mayde seruaunt of hers, were accused to be Sorcerers and Witches, and therefore they were both bounde fast to a poast and most cruelly and tyrannously were salued thorough the myddell

dell of their bodyes with Sawes, the whiche they endured and suffered most patiently and constantly, without shewing either in countenance or gesture, any feare or faintnesse, duringe so horrible and detestable a torment.

¶ The rare and wonderfull patience,
 ¶ the sufferance, wortby of cuerlasting remembraunce, ¶ constancie, whereoff the lyke cannot bee founde else where. For what stony hart wil not bee mollified to heare this, or whose haire wil not stande vp, to heare such a cruell martirdome rehearled. What can the detractors of women saye vnto this, but that they must confesse in despiight of their beardes, that this kinde is as constant, as patient, and as stoute in sufferance, as the virill sort. For although the nature of women (as Chrysostome sayth) is to beare great affection to their children, and to purchesse for them goods, wealth, honour, & dignitie, and desire to see them great & mighty in this world, neuertheless ther are found an infinit sort, of good and vertuous Mothers, the which doe forgette this folishe naturall affection,

The praise, and

and couet and wish rather to aduozue & furnish their children, with y^e knowledge and feare of God, & wish no other thing to them, but that they should perseuer in the love and feare of God, & in the sayth of Christ Iesus. Such was the good and vertuous lady Augusta, mother to Simphorian, who through hir vertuous and wise admonition and counsaile, moued & stirred by hir onely sonne to receive martyrdom, so; to mainteine christian religion. And vnder the Empire of Adrian, a sage and wise lady named Sophia, did put into graue & bury thre of hir owne daughters with hir own hands, y^e which to hir great consolation and comfort, she saue suffer death so; the testimonye of Christ Iesus, & in the Annals of Fraunce ye may read of the Lady Blanch, mother vnto king Loyes, other wise called Saint Loyes, she would oftentimes say that she had rather se hir beloued sonne dye, then that he should wittingly and willingly offend God, & transgresse his commaundments. But if I should stand to rehearse all suche histories as speake and declare the constancie of vertuous women,

Augusta the
mother of
Simphorian

Blanch mo-
ther to saint
Loyes.

I shoulde haue sufficient matter for to make a greate volume. Therefore I will ende this matter, with the vnspokeable constancy of y^e seuen Machabees, through the instigation & perswasion of their heroicous mother, who taught them not the doctrine that the Magarenes vse to teach their children, that is, to gather & buyde by gods by all meanes they can, and to encrease in wealth and riches by all wayes possible, but she did so wel instruct them in the law of God, that for to mainteyne the same, she saue them all before hir face, suffer the most cruellest martyrdomes that mans malice may invent or thinke vpon, for to mainteine the law of God, against the decree of cruell Antiochus, & she did so greatly encourage them that they suffered terrible death most ioyfully one after an other, so the which they offered themselves most willingly with seruent & constant mindes, knowing that if they were through the rage and crueltye of the tyrant and his tormentors, put to payne, that it came not to them by ill lucke or chance, but through the vnsearchable prouidence

I.ij.

of

The vvonder
der full con-
stancie of
the seauen
Machabees.
2. Machab.
cap. 7

The praise, and

of God, that suffered such thinges to bee
for their correction and chastisement.

And this is a good argument & most
sure, that God will not suffer sinners to
continue in the desire of their owne wil,
but when they fall hee chasteneth them,
whereby hee sheweth y^e hee loueth them,
and hath care ouer them, and doth not
with them as hee doth with other nati-
ons, the which hee giueth ouer to theyr
owne heartes lust, & suffereth them thro-
ough his long patience, reseruing their
punishment altogether vntill the day of
iudgement. But vnto his people, he doth
not altogether withdrowe his mercye,
nor neuer forsaketh them, but correcteth
and chasteneth them most louingly when
they fall into sinne. This good matrone
mindinge to keepe and obserue the com-
maundments of the law, & not the kings
wil, after that she had sene the great con-
stancie of hir chyldren whome also she
salve dyd befoze hir face, shee in the same
quarrell, at y^e last suffered death also hir
selfe, most ioyfully & willingly. And who-
soeuer is desirous to vnderstand further
of this histoꝝy, let him read y^e 7. Chapter
of

of y^e second booke of the Machabees, wher
it is at large set out, but it is time to end
this matter. For in reading of histories,
there can be found no better nor greater
examples of vertue, the of good & worthy
women. Therefore Salomon saith in his
Proverbs, he that hath a wise, honest, & Prouerbs, 31
faythfull wife, she is much better worth
to him then pearles & precious stones.
Let y^e detractors therfore, & euil speakers
of feminine kinde, talk & prate what they
will, but they shal neuer perswade me to
the contrary, but that ther is as excellent
perfections and graces, as well in y^e soule
and body of women, as are in men, and
rather more, and otherwise they cannot
make me beleue, no although they had al
the bookes of Rhetorick, both Latin and
Greeke, y^e are in y^e world. For if we will
wel behold their constancie in aduersitie,
we shal finde y^e they haue excelled & out-
passed y^e Curios, y^e Fabians, y^e Camillians, y^e V Women
Scipions, & the Hamibals. The examples are haue excel-
so vulgar & comon y^e we need not to reuer- led and pas-
the, as of Flauia, Euphronia, Theodora, Sa sed men in
bina, Amonaria & Dionisa, Romain virgins constancie.
y^e which haue ben more redy for to receive
death to

The praise, and

to mainteyne the glozy & honour of god,
then the tyrants haue bene, to minifter
vnto them the paine. Howe oftentimes
haue women ben the cause of many faire
and great victozies, how oftentimes haue
they most stoutly & courageously resisted
and withstoode the troupes & squadrons,
of the weake and fainte vertue of men,
they which they haue ouerthrowne, bro-
ken, and dispersed. What a company of
Laceniens haue wee read of, that with
their owne handes haue killed their na-
turall chyldzen, when they haue founde
them wicked, froward, & despising their
parents, & therfore haue they killed them
as vnworthy to haue so noble mothers, &
what captaine was euer so famous, that
might be compared vnto the triumphant
Chlobila, what enterpryse may be cōpa-
red to Semiramis doings, what vertue
was euer like vnto þe vertue of Zenobia,
Thalistris, or Panthasilla. Therefore let
all such venomous tōgues cease, þe hereto-
fore tane taken in hand to blame & de-
fame the noble sexe of women.

¶ Fleete endeth the praise of women.

T H E

THE DISPRAISE of Women.

¶ Of the first originall of Women according to the opinion of the Heathen. Cap. I.



After that I haue long sojourned and continued as if it were in a sayre and pleasant Pallace contemplating and beholding the great vertues and excellent perfections of women: How doe I begin to enter as it were into the most filthy, noysome and uncleane Stable of Augeas, wherein there was so much filth and uncleaneesse heaped vp, as three thousand Oxen in many yeares were able to make: For there is founde so many examples of the vices and imperfections of women, that better it were, for the keeping and preserving of honestie to passe over such infamy with silence, then to disclose and make it openly manifest.

The dispraise of Women.

It may also be thought, that in describing them, I haue chaunged my copy, and that out of the same mouth I should blow both heat and colde. But considering that the Physitian & natural Philosopher, in describing the nature & propertie of hearbs, & p^r Plannets, doth aswell profite in declaring and shewing those that are mortiferous and venomous; that thereby we may take the better hede and beware, as to shewe and manifest those that are good, wholesome and profitable, and although there haue bene a great number of women whose doings haue ben so peruerse that it seemeth good not to make mention thereof, to the ende that it should not be knowen nor thought that such wickednes might be reigning in the worlde. Notwithstanding it is better that the memozy thereof be knowen & manifest the kept in silence, to p^r ende y^e good & vertuous women should not therat gale & wonder, but therby learn to eschew & avoid al occasiōs y^e may prouoke the to p^r lyke. But as for me, I will in nothing blemmysh the fame and reputation of
good

good women, noꝛ despise noꝛ contempne
 their honour, neither will I take exam-
 ple of a great many, y haue taken great
 delight and pleasure to besame them in
 their writings, mainteining and uphol-
 ding, that it is moze rare and scarce to
 finde, a wise and reasonable woman and
 that is strong & constant, then the Phoe-
 nix, who as Philosophers say, although
 she be alone and singular in hir kinde,
 yet neuerthelesse she doth continue and
 renue in such sort that alwayes ther is
 to be founde one alpye and no moze: but
 it is not so of wise and sober women, soꝛ
 common lechers & inuents of lyes and
 slanderous speakers, affirme & say, that
 there was neuer but one good woman &
 yet y diuel caried hir away. But we wil
 leaue such end tongues to their own fo-
 lishnes. For as for me, I hold it of a cer-
 teine truth, y the woman is as wel per-
 taker of reasoꝛ & wisdom as y ma, & y the
 is as wel y image of god as y man, & also
 prtaker of saluatioꝛ & vnderstandg as wel
 as he. For in y substance of ma was y too
 ma cōteined & comprehēdet & was made
 out of his side, to becoꝛ flesh of his flesh,
 bone

A wyfe &
 discret wy-
 man as rare
 to finde as
 a Phoenix.

The dispraise of Women.

boane of his boanes and member of his members. Wherefore that which I shall here recyte of wicked women, I trust shall not offende those that are good, but thereby their vertue and wisdom will rather shine the more, being as two contraries in sighte one of the other.

Now I am most sure that honest women will take no offence of y^e which shall be spoken, of those that are evil, but they that are wicked, for that I shall reprove them, will take me for their enemy, and yet against all reason and right. But that is, because that such as are evil and vicious are lyke to scabbe, howsoever that will not suffer to be rubbed.

But now to come to our purpose and to search out the original of y^e woman according to the opinion of the Gentiles & Heathen. The Aegyptians holde opinion, y^e when that Nylus y^e famous river did so swell that it ouerranne the banks and borders thereof, and ouerranne the lande, that then there were cast up and remayned many cloddes of earth mixed together with the fatnesse thereof.

And

The opinion
of the Aegyptians
touching y^e
creation of
y^e woman.

And that through the heate that came vpon them, there engendered and were created diuers and sundrye straunge beastes, among the which was founde the first woman. And this therefore is the cause why they haue so little reason and vnderstanding, in that they were bozne without mothers, and lyue without rule, and dye without all order, the which haue so smal iudgement, that they can neuer forgiue an injury noꝝ reward a good tourne.

The Grecians are of an other opinion touching the creation of a woman, saying, that in y^e Desart of Arabia, the Sun giueth moze power of heat then in any other place. And y^e at the beginning there appeared & was seene one woman onely & no moe, with one onely Phoenix the which was created of the water and the woman of the great heat of the Sun & of the dust that proceeded from rotten trees when the woꝝmes had eaten them, & their reason is, bicause y^e womē with their tongues are as fire., and in their conditions verie rotten. For Nature hath putte all their strength and power

The opinion of the ancient Greeces touching the creation of the woman.

The dispraise of Women,

V Why the
wvoman
was crea-
ted.

Plato doubt-
ed vvher
ther he
shold place
vvomen ei-
ther amōgst
reasona-
ble creatu-
res, or a-
mongst
brute beas-
tes.

in their tōgues, & the serpent hath not so
much venim noꝝ poplō in his taile as the
womā hath in hir tōgue. And foꝝ confir-
matiō of this matter, y Comētatoꝝ of Pla-
to wꝛiteth y the womā is a kinde so frail
variable, vncōstant, vnperfect & mutable,
y it semeth y nature was to seeke whē y
womā was created, & gaue no regard to
hir, vnles it wer foꝝ this only respect mo-
re foꝝ y delectatiō & pleasure y man hath
in hir & foꝝ y cōtinuāce of humain kinde,
then foꝝ any perfectiō y is in hir. And foꝝ
this cause, Plato doubteth in what rank
oꝝ order he ought to place y womā, either
amōgst reasonable creatures oꝝ amongst
brute beasts: foꝝ y although they haue a
soule, which of nature is subiect to reaso-
n, yet neuertheles they are so giuē to their
sensual appetite & brutish desire (wherin
they are too willing to please in al thigs) y
by very good reason he doubteth whether
they haue reason. And foꝝ this cause, y ve-
ry same Plato said, y he gaue thanks to
god foꝝ iij things specially. The first, foꝝ
that he was a man and not a beast: the
second, foꝝ that he was boꝛne a man and
not a woman: and the third foꝝ that of
action

Patron he was a Greeke, and not an
 Indell. And Marcus Aurelius, as fa-
 mous in Philosophie, as in governing
 y^e Empire spake in this maner of womē.
 Seeing y^e gods hath comaunded & cur de-
 stinies haue so appointed it, y^e men canot
 liue in this world wout women, I ther-
 fore admonish youg men & pray the olde
 men, I put wise men in remembraunce, &
 instruct y^e simple, that they fly y^e company
 of wicked women and such as haue an il
 name, as they would fly y^e noysome pesti-
 lence & mortal plague. For I sayd, y^e all the
 venemous beasts y^e are, haue not so much
 poison in all their bodies, as one woman
 onely hath in hir mischeuous tōgne. For
 this cause y^e Romans did ordein by their
 laws, y^e womē shold not succēd. And Vo-
 lurnius a Tribune & Pretor ouer y^e peo-
 ple, made an ordeinace, by y^e which he so-
 bad, y^e no womā shold be an inheritor nor
 heire. The which law Marke Cato dyd
 perswade the people to maintein & kepe,
 to y^e ende y^e the heritages & patrimonies,
 shold descēd & come to y^e next heire males
 of y^e kindred, to y^e end y^e the name of y^e kin-
 dred & stock, shold not be extinguisht nor
 lost, but

The nota-
 ble saying
 & admoni-
 tion of Mar-
 cus Aure-
 lius.

For to flye
 and shunne
 such vvomen
 as are
 of a vvick-
 ed lyfe.

By the Ro-
 maine law-
 es vvomen
 do not inhe-
 rit any inhe-
 ritance.

The dispraise of Women,

but that it should alwayes continue and remayne from time to time thzough the benefit of the next heire male.

The Law
vocany ex-
cludeth
vvomen
from suc-
cession

And among the Frenchmen, there is a Lawe the which they name the Lawe Vocany, and that expzessely forbiddeth that no Daughter shall enherit the fath-
thers noz Mothers possession noz heri-
tage, although there were no other chil-
dzen.

And Pharamond following this law,
did ordayne, that no woman should suc-
cede in the Kingdome of Fraunce, noz
rule as Quene thereof, saying that it
was no heritage but a dignitie. And e-
uen as women cannot be pertakers of
such a dignitie as to gouerne and rule so
puissant and mightie a Kingdome: So
also they oughte not to succede therein
no moze then they do in the dignitie of
Priesthode, in the which neuer woman
succeeded, of what authoritie oz degre
soeuer she was.

The Law
of the
Gauls.

And this Law was called the Lawe
Sallique, oz rather the law of the Gauls.
Which Lawe was not onely obserued
and kept by Pharamonde, but also by
king

The dispraise of Women. 65

king Clouis, Charlemaine and all those
that haue succeeded them. Now although
Saint Paul saith that Adam was not
deceiued, but the woman was deceiued &
was subdued to the transgression, for
which cause God sayd vnto hir, that hee
wold multiply hir sorrow, that is, in sor-
row and paine shoulde shee bring forth
childzen, and that hir lust should pertain
to hir husband, and he shoulde haue the
rule & power ouer hir. Neuerthelesse we
read in the . 27 . chapter of the booke of
Numbers, that after that the land of pro-
mise was deuided by Moses vnto the
childzen of Israel, accordinge to their
Tribes, for an inheritaunce: there came
to him 4 daughters of Zelaphead, whose
names were, Mahela, Noha, Hagla, Mel-
cha, and Thirza, these I say came & stood
before Moses & Eleazer the Priest, & as-
ked them a part & portion of 4 holy land,
for their inheritaunce: from which they
ought not to be put from, nor relected,
although their father had left behinde
him no heires males. So they requi-
red a possession and heritage among the
bretheren of their father.

Timoth
cap. 2

Genesis. 8

Numb. 37

V Women
ought to in-
herit by the
comādemēt
of God.

Ik.

After

The dispraise of Women.

After that Moses had heard them, he brought their cause befoze the Lord, and the Lord commaunded to giue them a possession to inherit among their fathers bretheren, and to speak vnto the childezen of Israel and tell them, that if a man dye and haue no sonne, they shoulde tourne the inheritance vnto his daughters if he had any.

¶ Of the miseries & mischiefes that hath bene in the world, by reason of wicked women. Cap. 2.

NOWE euen as these that are wise and vertuous women, seeme to bee sent from heauen for the consolation and comfort of our humaine life, whercoff I neede not at this time to speake, nor to write, euen so the wicked & peruerse sort which haue as it were declined from nature, become more worse then the brute beasts, which thzough their wickednesse haue spoyled the whole world). For who that would repeate thinges from the beginning of the worlde, and consider how that Adam being indued with greater.

per

Great per-
sons haue ben
deceined by
women.

perfections then euer was any man ly-
 using, was notwithstandinge ouercom-
 med with the first assault and prouocati-
 on that his wyfe made and prouoked
 him withall. Sampson who was the
 strongest man that euer we read off,
 was by a harlot ouercomed named Dal-
 lila. The woman hath triumphed ouer
 Lothes chastitie. The woman hath trou-
 bled the holynes of Dauid. The woman
 hath caused Salomon the wisest that e-
 uer was, to become a foole. The woman
 caused Saint Peter that was so stronge
 in fayth, to denye his Master Christ Je-
 sus. The woman caused Iob to mur-
 mure and grudge, whom the diuell him-
 selfe coulde not once stirre nor with-
 drawe from his simplicitie. The woman
 throughe hir subtil craft and pollicy found
 the meanes to be Hope and to sit in his
 seate. To be short, there is nothing found
 in all the world so harde or vneassie, but
 that a womans heart will thereunto at-
 teine, when shee is disposed to frame hir
 minde to it. And this moued Codrus to
 say, y the Firmament doth not containe
 so many Stars, nor the sea so many fishes,

The dispraise of Women.

The sayinge
of the Poet
Godrus.

The saying
of Medea in
Euripides.

The sayings
of Bartolus
& Accursus
concerning
women,

The saying
of the Poet
Pacuius.

The saying
of Hipocra-
tes.

The saying
of Aristotle
touching
the malice
of women.

as a woman hath fraudes and deceites,
hidden in hir heart & minde. And Medea
in Euripides sayth, that women are ene-
mies to all good, but prompt to all euill.
Likewise Bartoleus and Accursus, famous
Lawyers in the Columnes of the Juris-
consults, haue not feared to leaue in wri-
ting, that all women were wicked, and
that there was no neede to make any
lawes or ordinances for good women, bi-
cause they are light sowen, and for y^e ther
was nener a one to be founde. The Po-
et Pacuius, was of that same opinion,
that there cannot be found one good wo-
man. And Hipocrates wryting to Dennis
sayth, that malice is as it were naturall
to a woman, the which if it be not with
speed kept downe and vnder, it groweth
and springeth bp a pace: as euill weede
and vnprofitable fruite. Aristotle in the
ninth booke de Animalibus, hath left in
wryting, that as women are moze tender
and softer & smoother skinned then men,
so also they are moze crafty and wicked.
All the Tragicities of Euripides are full,
of the sleights, deceits, subtilties, & wick-
ed doings of women.

But

But to the ende that ye shall not thinke that none but prophane authoꝛs haue bene of that opinion: Sirach, who foꝛ his wisdome, was as famous among the Hebrews, as Thales foꝛ his philosophy was amongst the Greekes, hath left in wꝛiting, that the first original & beginning of sinne came by a woman, & that thorough hir, we are all made subiect to death, furthemoꝛe, it were better to dwell with a Lyon & a Dragon, then to keepe house with a wicked wife, & also it is farre better to dwell in a wildernesse then with a woman that is alwaies bꝛawling and full of strife. Likewise the transgression of the man is much moꝛe tollerable, then the well doing woman y^e flāudereth with hir tongue. And Chꝛisostome in the Sermon of the beheading of Saint Iohn, & in the 34. Homely upon the fourth of saint Iohn, sayth, that among all the wilde beasts, there is none found so hurtfull and noysome as a woman. And if we will diligently consider, and read the auncient histories, we shall finde that neither Iesus the sonne of Sirach, noꝛ yet Saint Iohn Chꝛisostome

The saying of Sirach touching the wickednesse of women. Iesus the son of Sirach. Cap. 25.

The saying of Chꝛisostome cōcerning the malice of the woman.

The dispraise of Women.

The evils
that are fal-
len vpon
men by
women

hath done any wrong in that which they
haue written touching the wickednes of
women, for by reading the sayd histories
we finde, that the greatest mischiefe that
hath fallen to the world, hath come and
proceeded from women, which haue cau-
sed almost al the miseries that haue fal-
len vpon mankind. Example by Eue, tho-
rough whose transgressiō al mākinde are
made subiect to death. Example by Pan-
dora, who by opening of hir bore, pōwered
out al kinde of diseases vpon y^e earth. Ex-
ample Helena, through whose cause war
was raised against Troy, and that fa-
mous citie was destroyed, and the whole
countrey layde waste. Example the fable
of Danaides, that killed al their husbands.
Example Dianara that caused Hercules
most cruelly to dye thorough the veni-
mous Shirt that shee sent him. Exam-
ple by the history of the women of the
Ile of Lenno, the whiche as witnesseth
Euripides in Hercuba, killed al their hus-
bands not leuing one aline. Example by y^e
history or fable of Aegyptos, who hauing
married fiftie of his daughters to fiftie
of his Nephewes, they strangled al their
hus-

The dispraise of Women. 68

husbands in one night, except one y^e was
saued by his wife. The example of Cle-
opatra, & a great number of others, that
haue caused nothing but misery & wretched-
ednesse in the world.

So that Salomon in the 7. of his Ec-
clesiasticus saith, that he found a woman
to be moze bitter then death, for that she
bath cast hir heart abrood, as a net that
fisher men vse, and as the snare that the
Hunter layeth, but he is wise that can es-
cape from hir, and there is none that can
escape hir snare but he only whom God
loneth, and that is in his fauour. And in
the same chapter, in speaking of y^e scarce-
nesse of god women, he sayth, that they
are a very small number, for amongst a
thousand men he hath found one good, but
amongst all women he could finde neuer
a one at al. And therfore ther was vpon a
time a good fellow y^e did complaine why
priests, Monks & friers (y^e which he called
god men) wer not permitted to mary af-
ter y^e they wer cōstituted in their orders,
& that Nuns likewise whō he called god
& holy womē, were not permitted to haue
to their husbands, those holy & good men,

A vvcma is
more bitte-
rer thē deeth
as vvitness
seeth Salomō
in the 7. of
his Ecclesi-
astes.

The com-
plainte of a
merry felo
lovv

The dispraise of Women.

before named, and hee dyd wishe that when any good women were founde, they shoulde be maryed to good men, that thozough them the worlde might be replenished with good children, but there are found a very small quantitie both of the one and the other, but much more fewer women then men, of whom it is commonly said, that smoke, raine, & a curst and froward wyfe, causeth a man to forsake his house and to be weary of his lyfe.

Three scourges sent into the world.

Bocas sayth, that the Gods beeinge angrye and displeased with humayne kinde, for the misdowinge and faulte of Prometheus, that brought the fyre of Heauen downe vppon the earth.

They sent therefore vppon the worlde thre kindes of scourges, that is to wyt, sickenesse and diseases, then trauayle and paine, and then women that are alwayes stirrers vp of debate and strife, which is the greatest scourge of al þ rest. This therfore beeing knowne & considered in the smal wisdome & want of discretion þ is to be found in þ feminine kinde, it is not without great reason & consideration that

that Christians haue excluded them, ^{VWomen} haue benei
from medlyng in the Church, and many ^{put frō deas}
Philosophers, haue excluded the from ^{ling in the}
their schooles of Philosophie. The Ju- ^{Church, frō}
risconsulls haue also forbiden them ^{Ciuill pol-}
from ciuill pollycie. The Mahomists, ^{lecy, & frō}
haue excluded them from Paradise. ^{the Scholes}
^{of Philoso-}
^{phie.}

The heathen and barbarous Asians,
haue putte them in the ranke of slaues
and bondemen. For to say þ truth they
are not sufficient nor abell to deale with
such great and waightie matters, as
toucheth Relygion, manners, govern-
ment and such lyke, vnlesse it bee by a
speciall grace of God.

For it seemeth that they are moze
borne and bredde vpon the earth, for to
enterteine and nourish voluptuousnesse
and Idlenesse, then for to bee tray-
ned vp in matters of wayght and im-
portance.

And it is not without a cause that
Salomon hath compared man vnto the
Sunne bicause of his firme and stable
constancie, and the woman vnto the
Moone for hir mutabyltie and chaung-
ing. For as the Moone in hir coniuncti-

Man is com-
pared to the
Sunne, and
þ woman to
the Moone

The dispraise of Women.

on with the Sunne, doth not appeare
noꝛ shew neither in the firmament noꝛ
vpon the earth, but in hir opposition,
when she is withdrawne and lengthe-
ned from the Sunne, then she shineth
in hir full, and appeareth in hir whole
brightnesse. Euen so ought all women
to be, the which shoulde haue no voyce
noꝛ talke in the presence of men, but it
shoulde be counted foꝛ noughte and of
no value.

Plato his
lawe.

Amongst the lawes of Plato there is
one that sayth. Let vs commande and
ordeine, that all such faultes that wo-
men shall make and commit with any
manner of person, may be pardoned and
foꝛgiuen: but foꝛ such faultes and tres-
passes as they commit with their tōgue,
shall neuer be foꝛgiuen. Foꝛ that sinne
and wickednesse, which is committed
with an euill person, is thꝛough frayle-
nes of nature, but y^e offence committed
with the tongue, proceedeth from an en-
uious & a malitious minde. And when
this law was first made, ther was then
a great want & scarcitie of wicked wo-
men, and great plentie of good women.

But

The dispraise of Women. 70

But now things are otherwise chaunged, for an infinite number are they that are wicked, and very few is the number of those that are chaste and godly.

The Romaines also hauing experience of the wauiing and vnconstant dealings of women, haue sundrye times graunted diuorcements betwene a man and his wife, because they perceiued how the women bare lesse affection to their husbands in two daies, then they would to their secrete louers in two years, but it were best not to mone this matter any farther, for as the common saying is, the more it is stirred, the more it will stink, & the loathsomer it will be in rendering a most vnpleasant sauer of y^e wickednesse of women, specially of those of the Antarticke, who would not stick to giue their daughters to all commers, as maye be read in the singularities of Andrew Theuet.

¶ Of the ambitious doing of a woman that aspired to the Popedome, Cap. 3.

Although

The dispraise of Women.

A woman
aspired and
got þ Pope
dome, and
was made
Pope.
platina, Bo-
cas, Sabelli-
cus, & Vol-
lratenus.

Although there be no dignitie in the world that hath bene moze honoured and had in reuerence then the dignitie of the Pope, from which Supremacie women haue bene alwayes kept backe and not thought worthy: yet notwithstanding ther was once a woman moze bolder then the rest, who by hir ambition and craftie pollicie was elected, and gouerned the said popedom, for the space of two yeares and five moneths.

Pope Ioane
went to Athens
with
an English
Muncke in
mans appar-
rell.

This woman Pope, which was taken for a man, was named Ioan the. 8. But hir right name was Gilberta, a Dutch woman of Magunce, who in mans apparel went to Athens with an English Monke of the Abbey of Fulda, and there she continued for a certeyne time: from whence she went to Rome, where through hir counterfait lyfe, shee was made Pope.

But God opening the wickednesse of those holy Fathers, and displaying in dede the Whore of Babilon rightly in hir colours, it came to passe that þ same holy Pope through secrete familiaritie
and

and company with some of hir Cardinalls, was gotten with childe and became bigge, the which she could not so well cloake nor keepe secret: But that God from whom nothing is hid, made the same manifest, to the perpetuall ignomie and shame of that Sea for ever. For vpon a time as she was going in a generall Procession to visit the church of S. Iohn de Latran, according to y^e custome, she began to fall to hir labour & trauayle of childebirth, & after she was deliuered, she dyed, and so did hir childe, and they were both buried without honour and funerall pompe bicause of this mishappe.

Since which time, the Pope and his Cardinalls doe auoyd to come nere that place wher this shame was taken, but they take an other waye as detestling so horrible and wicked a fact. And also it is sayd that in the same stræt ther is erected a Statue or Piller of Marble, that representeth the childebirth and the death of this Pope, for a perpetuall remembraunce thereof. But for bicause that Platina in the lyfe of the Popes,
Sabellicus

The disprays of Women.

Sabellicus in his first booke, Eneardus in his ninth booke, Raphael Voletareus Lib. 22. Bergomenſeus Lib. 11. Boscas and the ſhardell of time, haue moſt playnely ſet out this matter at large in their hiltories and writings, therefore I wil ſtand no longer ther vpon, nor ſpeak no moze, as a thing moſt odious and ignominious to the Popes of Rome, and to all Papists for euer, that make ſo great accompt of their holy ſather the Pope.

¶ Of the lyghtneſſe and vnſtabilitie of women that can keepe no ſecrets. Cap. 4.

Caſto y elder ſaid, that among things wherof a man ought greatly to repent him, the chiefest is for vttering his ſecret vnto his wife, for y ſhe can keepe counſell in nothing. What is it y a woman doth not know, for hir tongue is alwayes working and doth neuer reſt, but is lyghte, vnconſtant, and can hide nothing

made mee to knowe that it is not good to vtter or declare anye secrete vnto you bicause of your vnstabilitie and lightnesse, and therefore I cannot graunt you your desire touchinge your request, for that you can keepe no secrete nor counsaile although the matter depende vpon lyfe and death, neither can I permit you to confesse your selues one to another seeing that you cannot hide things in secrete as men can doe. The Ladye Abbess hearing this, was all amazed and confounded, and could make no answer for very shame, nor she durst not prosecute hir sute any more.

Aulugelus rehearseth almost the lyke of the wauering lightnesse of a woman of Rome, sayinge that the Senators of Rome did vse to cary their men chyldren with them into the Senate house, to the ende that by seeing & beholdinge the good order that their fathers kepte there, they might bee the better instructed in the publyke affayres when they should come to gouerne. It came to passe vpon a day that in the Senate house amongst the Senators there was a matter of greate

L. weight

A notable history touching secrecy rehearsed by Aulugelus. li. i. cap. 23. and also by Macrobius. li. i. cap. 6. of his Saturnals.

The dispraise of Women.

weight and importance, debated among them, by reason whereoff, the Senators were later and stayed longer in the Senate house, then they were accustomed to doe, and they forbade their children to disclose or utter any part of that which was had in question that daye. Now amongst the children, there was a younglinge, sonne unto one of the Senators and named Papirus, who when hee was come home with his Father, his Mother was verie earnest, and laye sore vppon him to know what was talked off and concluded in the Senate house, to whome the Lad answered, that hee was forbidden to utter it, his Mother not content with that aunswere, was very angrye, and threatened hir sonne with bitter words, Papirus perceyuing the importunitie of his Mother, and how she had threatened to beate him, dyd sodeinly deuise a prettie pollicie, and sayd vnto his mother in this manner. It was this daye thought good, & debated by many of the Senators, as well for the weale publike, as for the increasing of the people, that euery
man

man should haue two wiues. And some againe were of contrary opinion, maintaining y^t it wer better y^t a womā should rather haue two husbands. When Papius had declared this vnto his Mother, she beleued hir sonnes saying, by reasoⁿ wherof without any longer delaye, she sent word vnto other women of Rome, for to prouide a remedye & to withstand and let that men in no wise should haue two wiues, but rather that euery woman might haue two husbands, in such manner, that the next daye in the morninge, the Matrones of Rome gathered themselves together, and came to the gate of the Senate house, beseeching the Senators not to ordeine and make a lawe so vnreasonable and vniust, as to mary two women to one man, but it should be much better for them to ordeine & appointe the contrary. At which wordes y^e Senators were greatly abashed not knowing what their wiues ment by uttering such wordes, untill that young Papius did resoluē them of their doubt, declaring vnto the in the open Senate, what his Mother hadde asked him,

The dispraise of Women.

The praise
of young
Papius.

and how for feare of hir hee was constrained to inuent this newe deuise and mery deceite. For the which the young man was greatly commended and praised of all the whole Senate, and the great lightnesse and vnstable dealing of his mother was manifestly knowne vnto all the worlde; for the which, she deserved as much blame and reproch, as hir sonne obtained honour in not reuealing nor utteringe the secret of the Senate: which ought not to be opened nor reuealed.

An other
historic of
Octavius
Cezar & of
Fuluius.

Octavius the Emperour did vpon a time reueale and vtter a very great secreete vnto a friende of his named Fuluius, who opened the same vnto his wife, the which whē it came to the Emperours knowledge, hee was verie angrye, and greatly blamed Fuluius the Senatoz, declaringe vnto him that it was greate reproche and ignomye to him for euer, in that hee coulde not no better keepe counsaile nor refrayne his tongue. For the which Fuluius was so sorry and agreued, that for the very same cause hee determined to kill himselfe,
and

and so hee went home and sharply re-
proued his wife, for the slander and
shame that shee had done vnto him.

But in steede of comfort shee made
him this aunswere, sayinge, that a-
gaynst all wronge and right hee was
offended with hir, consideringe that
since the longe time that they had ly-
ued together in the societie of wedlocke,
hee ought to haue knowne hir naturall
and lyght complexion, the whiche if
hee dyd knowe, hee shoulde not haue a-
bused his knowledge, neyther haue put
anye confidence or trust in hir, for the
whiche cause not longe time after his
wyfe killed hir selfe, and hir husbände
Fuluius in lyke manner killed himselfe
by hir, and thus happened it vnto them,
in that they coulde not keepe secret that
whiche was reuealed vnto them.

There are sonnde diuers other ex-
amples of the lyght and vncostly be-
hinges of women whiche shoulde be ve-
ry longe to rehearse. Wherefore those
that will trye and knowe if their wyles
be secret and can keepe counsaile, doe
accustomably vse to doe as those that

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trye a new vessell, the which first they will fill with water to trye whether it will runne or leake, and not with wine, or any other precious liqor, because that the experience and tryall shall not cost much, although it wast and runne out.

Even so they that mistrust the light and unstable dealings of women doe think and inuent some straunge deuise, by the which they assaye and trye their faithfulness before they will committe any secret truth to their knowledge and hearing.

¶ Of the great curiositie and curious superfluitie of wdmens apparell.
Cap. 5.

Saint Peter, who was one of the chiefest of the Apostles and a pillar of the Church, doth exhort and commaunde wiues to be decent and comely in their apparell, and that it shoulde not be in outward shew with broidered haire and hanging on of golde, or adorning on of gorgeous apparell, but that they shoulde decke and furnishe themselves

1. Peter.
cap. 3.

selues with vertue. And for this cause
 God threateneth the women of Hieru-
 salem, that with their superfluous & cost-
 ly ornaments did excede. For by the
 Prophet Esay it is sayde, bicause that
 y daughters of Hierusalem walke with
 stretched out neckes, and with vaine
 wanton eyes, seeinge also they goe trip-
 pinge so nicely with their fete: Where-
 fore will the Lorde haue the heades of
 the daughters of Syon and Hierusa-
 lem, and discover their shame. And hee
 will take awaye, the gorgeousnesse of
 their apparell, their spanges, cheines,
 partellets and collars, their braceletts,
 bowes, and goodly flowred & embroide-
 red rayment, their bryches and head-
 bandes, rings and garlandes, their baly-
 day clothes, bayls, kerchiefes, pins, glas-
 ses, eypralles, bonnets & laches, & in stead
 of good smel, they shall haue stinke, & for
 girdels, cords, & lose bonds, & for fine cur-
 led haire, baldnes, for a stomacher, sack-
 cloth, for beauty witherednes & sunbur-
 nig. Now to a comon wealth y ought to be
 wel governed & ruled, ther can happen no
 come no greater harme noz inconueni-
 ce

Howe God
 threateneth
 the womē
 of Hierusa-
 lem.
 Esay. 3.

Howe

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Honest chaste
stetie and
shamefast
nesse ought
to be y^e ve
ri ornaments
of vertuous
women.

The saying
of S. Cyprian

The saying
of Aristotle

then by such excesse and curious superfluitie of apparell, for honestie & shamefastnesse ought to be the very ornaments of god and vertuous women, and not rich attyre and precious Jewels, through the whiche they drawe the heartes of young men, nourishing and entertaining their concupiscence, kindling & enflaming their desires, for although they bee no harme to themselves, yet is it most sure that they spoyle and hurt others, and although y^e they be chaste & honest, notwithstanding their garments and decking up of themselves is a token of disbeneficie, as Saint Cyprian doth witnesse, saying, that such vndercent and vaine rayment, and costly attyre is not decent nor comely, but for light and vaine women, whiche thorough their paintings and prickinge up of themselves, do disguise and transfigure that which God hath made, and alter and charge themselves into the forme and shape of Bathan.

Aristotle sayth, that it is most decent and fit for women to be sober & comely in apparell, and to be garments of lesse value and price then the lawes hath ordeined,

deined, bicause that neyther the excellencie of beautie, neyther costly garments, nor aboundaunce of Jewels of gold nor pretious stones, doth not giue so great prayes vnto women, as to vse a modest meane in such things and to haue a care and studie howe to lyue well.

And the Philosopher Demochares sayd, that the fairest ornament and decking of a woman was to vse meane apparell and few wordes, and to haue a good husband. The wife of Philon being on a time asked, why she did not weare a crowne vpon hir head as well as other Ladies, she made this answer that she was well enough decked with the vertue and ornaments of hir husbande.

The notable saying of the philosopher Demochares.

The vwise answer of the wife of Philon.

Licurgus the Lawgiuer bade the Lacedemonians, by his lawes did forbid women to weare all kinde of Jewels, of golde, silver and pretious stones, to the ende that they should deke themselves with the ornaments of vertue.

Licurgus lawe.

After the second Pussicke battaile was ended, there was published within

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An ordi-
nance of the
Romaines
for womens
apparell.

Rome a certeine ordinance, by the
which it was forbidden and defended,
that the women should not decke them-
selues with golde nor rayment of sundry
coulours, the which ordinance conti-
nued untill that the disordinate lust of
Asia did occupy and haunt the Citie of
Rome. For when the lustie dames of
Rome had seene and beelde the newe
fashion and straunge attire of the straū-
gers, they requiring to haue the lyke,
as women that lusted and longed, cra-
yed and desired permission and leaue to
weare such kinde of garments as they
should thinke good and necessary. The
which the good & wise Cato withstood &
perswaded to the contrary by his Ora-
tion y^e he made in y^e Senate. Although the
which he shewed them the inconuenien-
ces & daungers that thereon might arise.
But notwithstanding his Oration, the
Tribunes and Proruosts of the people,
being overcome with the importuni-
tie of their wiues & with their obstinate
opinion, they obtained libertie for their
pride, so that it was permitted them to
weare what garments they would.

The

The which afterward was an occasion
of great troubles and dissolutions: but
at the last it was remedied and prou-
ided for, by the good Ladye Opia, who
was the cause that at Rome there was
a Law set out for to redresse superfl-
uous apparell by hir prouocation, who
also would not suffer hir subiects at any
time to weare any garment otherwise
then the order that shee diuine appoynt,
which was such, that is, that a woman
of what qualitie soeuer she was should
not weare nor beare about hir, in any
bordure or goldsmithes worke no more
then halfe an ounce of golde which is
the weight of foure pence. By reason of
which law the women and maydes of
Rome did disoayne and refuse their pre-
cious and costly garnements and Jewels
that Dennis the tyrant of Siracusia had
sent them for their honour and mag-
nificence, but they answered that
such costly apparell and Jewells would
rather be vnto them a dishonour, then
glorie.

The lawe
Opia, agaiſt
curious and
superfluous
apparell of
women.

The Ro-
mayne vir-
gins refused
the preci-
ous clothes
that Denys
the Tyrant
had sent the

Also King Pirrhus set to Rome by his
Embassadors new & straunge raiment
of

The dispraise of Women.

of filke with rings of golde , but there
was not one only Lady found, y would
accept oz receiue them . O how happy
and blessed a world was that, O happy
time worthy to be wished for and desi-
red. For how adayes there ate founde
fewe people that will haue respecte to
their facultie and calling, oz to measure
themselves with reason , but they con-
sume and waste themselves and their
Matrimony in such dissolutions and ex-
cesse of apparell so far, that Kings and
Rulers are constrained by their lawes
to repress such vnmeasurable excesse
and vayne and superfluous abuse, kno-
wing that one of the chiefe and pinci-
pallest causes that bringeth pouertie to
their people and subiects , is the great
and unreasonable expences and charge,
that is bestowed and wasted vpon ap-
parell, aswel in men as in women, the
one coueting to excede the other from
time to time, & neuer wil guide nor rule
themselves with reason, the which hath
caused great & grievous complaints to
be made for redress of the same , and
good lawes and ordinaunces appoynted
to

to be kept, but as yet small redresse and amendement to be seene, specially in the inferior sorte, whose licentious livinge without feare of Godd & duetie to theyr Prince, either hauing respect to obserue good and wholesome lawes, maketh me to detest and abhoze to see it.

I remember a pretty example which happened in Fraunce to a Citizens wife of Paris which is woorthy to be noted, and then will I ende this matter. Upon a time the king of Fraunce caused it to be proclaymed and forbidden that none of his subiects should from thence forth use to weare such superfluous & excesse in their apparell as befoze time they did accustomably use, aswell in their gards and embroyderings of veluet, silke and golde, and chiefly by this proclamation the Citizens of Paris were forbidden and meane gentlewomen, and that vpon the payne and penualtie of a thousande crownes, for them that did offend besides imprisonment.

Now at that time there was in Paris a Citizen, that had a wife wonderfull costly in hir apparell, who after
that

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A history
of a citizen
of Paris &
his vvyse,
vvhome he
deceued by
a pretty de-
uise, to
make hir to
leane hir
gorgeous
apparell.

that she hadde hearde the Proclamati-
on and Edict, had greater desire then
befoze, to bee moze gorgeous and to
decke hir selfe with Chaynes, Brace-
lettes and Rings and with apparell af-
ter a newe fashion, wherevnto shee
dayly prouoked hir husbände to mayn-
teine hir withall and to giue hir money,
who tolde hir the penualtie and danne-
ger thereof, but all in vayne: And the
moze hir husbände woulde haue hadde
hir refraine, the moze importunate was
she, from day to day.

Wherewithall hee beeing wearied,
hee bethoughte him of a pretie deuise
with the which hee thoughte to trye
his wife. For hee hyzed foure Sere-
iannts to watch for hir vppon a time,
and to take from hir such Jewells as
she hadde about hir, and to carye hir to
prison.

and for to execute his pretended
purpose the better, hee gotte hir vpp-
on a Sundaye to putte on hir cost-
lye rayment, and to decke hir selfe
with all hir Ringes, Chaynes, Bra-
celettes and other Jewelles, as if
she

she shoulde goe to a wedding.

Who being ignozant of hir husbands deceite and substill deuice, wente hir wayes soe the of hir house accoꝝdinge to hir custome, to the Church, to heare seruice.

But in hir comming from thence, and retourning homelwarde, the Seriaunts accoꝝding as it was appoynted, caught holde of hir, and tooke from hir, the Chaynes, Rings, Bracelettcs and all the Jewells that she hadde, and they sayned that they woulde carpe hir to prison, accoꝝding to the Lawe and Edicte in that behalfe made, vntill hir husbände had payde the pennualltie of a thousand crownes, bicause that she did weare in hir apparell crimsen velvet, soꝝbidden by the saide Edict.

For the which cause she was moued and soꝝe troubled in hir minde, by the meanes whereoff she sent with al speed to hir husband soꝝ to come vnto hir, & to keepe hir from going to prison.

Who when hee came diide counterfayte that hee was verye angrye and displeased with the matter,
and

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and did most humbly and gratioſly deſire the Officers to reſtoze the Jewells agayne vnto his wife, but they reſuſed ſo to doe, but perſiſting ſtill in their former opinion, ſayde ſhe ſhoulde goe to priſon vntil the thouſand crowns were payd.

Hir huſbande perceiuing them to be ſo bent, gaue them certein crownes beſoze his wife, bicauſe they ſhoulde reſtoze to hir again hir ſaid Jewells & to let hir go vpon condition, that ſhe ſhould no moze from thenceforth weare no moze thoſe Jewells noz ſuch exceſſe and ſuperfluous apparell. The which ſhe promiſed to perſourme ſo that ſhe might bee at lybertie.

And ſo the Seriaunts let hir goe for that time, and ſecretly did reſtoze again to hir huſbande the crownes that hee had giuen them, who thzough this prettie deuife bzought to paſſe that neuer after his wife hadde any deſire to beare ſo great eſtate noz to weare ſuch gorgious and coſtly apparayle, neyther had ſhe after that, any deſire to weare them.

This

This deuise is very notable for married folkes, that many times doe consume moze substaunce then they haue, to decke and sette out their Wyues to their mindes and vn-satiabie desire.

Some that haue written of the manner and order of the Turkes, both saye, that they haue seene the wife of a Turke, that was a Curtisan, beare about her, the value of thre hundredth thousande Duckats in Jewells. What maye they thincke you doe, the Wyues of the Bascias that are Princes & great Lordes, I leaue it to your iudgement.

The vnderdible sumptuousnes of a Curtisan of Turkey.

But I cannot tell whether that

wee maye giue credite to it

or no, for if it bee

true they are

the most

magnefick and most

gorgeous woemen

in the

world.

(. .)

M.

TOF

The dispraise of Women.

¶ Of the barberous crueltie and
horrible tyranny of some wo-
men. Cap. 6.

Although that the naturall inclina-
tion of women be moze gracious
and pitiful then the inclination of men.
Nevertheless when they decline and
fall frō their kinde, they are much moze
crueller and bloudie and moze voyde
of humanitie and compassion, in such sort
that when they are in authoritie, they
exercise their power so disordnatlye,
that then when they will execute any
vengeaunce, they leaue no crueltie be-
hinde vnsorgotten. For so much as they
cannot master nor subdue their disordi-
nate passions & wicked affections. But
their choler and anger doth kinde and
burne so soze, that they become so raging
mad, that many times they enterprize
things, that the most cruellest tyraunts
in the worlde, would disdayne and bee
ashamed to doe, and they imagine such
mischiefes as Sathan himselfe could
not inuent, as euery one may see by the
course of histories from time to time.
that

that wee will bring in for this purpose, wherein feminine affections are so well expressed and set out, that the readers shall bee no lesse afrayde to heare them, then they haue shewed themselues bold and stout to execute and put them in practise.

Amongest all other mischieuous doings of women in the olde time, the doings of wicked Iesabel may take the Soueraigne and chiefe degree, as one that was most given to blood of all the feminine kinde, who in all kinde of iniquitie and sinne, dyd outpasse the most vnhumaine murtherers that euer was. For shee not beinge content in causing Achab the kinge hir husbände to committe Idolatrye, but made him to become the most cruellest Tyrant of all the kinges of Israel, prouokinge him to persecute and murther the holy Saints and Prophetes of GOD, and hee dyd delyght so much in mans blood, that hee made no more account thereof, then of the blood of brute beasts. But as for Iesabel, she sought to destroy all the Prophetes of the Lord.

Iesabel a
most bloudy
woman

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Insomuch that Obadiah the gouernour
of hir house was so sore displeased to see
the great slaughter of the Prophets, that
he was faine to hide a hundred of them,
3.kings.cap 18. fiftie in one Caeue and fiftie in an other,
and to prouide bread & water for them,
and by this meanes to preserue them
from the rage and cruell dealinge of
this bloud thirstie beast. So that Elia,
that good and holy father, thinking that
there was none left aliue but he alone,
of those that tooke Gods part, was faine
3.kings.cap 19. to fflye even vnto Horeb, the mounte of
God. And at the last, the more to encrease
hir crueltie and wicked pretence, they
caused the iust Naboth to bee stoned to
death, bringinge two false witnesses a-
gaynst him, men of Belial, to the ende
his vineyard should bee forfet and con-
fiscate to the king. But the iust bloude
of Naboth so vniustly shed, cryed before
God for vengeance, the which was not
denyed him. For God stirred vp Iehu
4.kings.cap 9. the king to punish this wicked woman,
who caused hir to be cast out at a win-
dow, and she was deuoured of Dogs in
the field of Iesrael.

What

The dispraise of Women. 83

What shall I say of Athalia the mother of king Ahaziah, who for that shee <sup>4.kings.cap
ii.</sup> suffered and mainteyned in hir kingdome Idolatrye and false woꝛshypping, agaynst the honour of God and his commaundements, shee was therefore slaine, for she seeing that hir sonne was dead, bicause no other should enioye the kingdome, she kept it by strength, exercising most cruell tyzanny, for she caused all the kinges seed to be slaine. Where with God being displeased, he would not suffer this tyzanny long to continue, for seauen years after ward by the comiannement of Iehoiada the high Priest, this Tygresse was put to death and punished according to hir desarts.

But is there any crueltie in þe world that may be compared to the barbarous and vnhumaine doinges of Thomiris, <sup>The barbe
rous cruelty
of Thomi-
ris.
Herodo.li.i</sup> queene of Scithia, who after that she had gotten þe victoꝝy of Cyrus & ouercommed him, when she had him in hir power, she caused his head to be cut off and cast it into a vessel of bloud, saying, now Cyrus drinke thy fill, thou that couldst neuer be satisfied with bloud.

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The which fact of hirs was so farre from humanitie that I cannot read nor heare speake of the like. For al hystories report that Cyrus was as valiaunt and as vertuous a Prince as any that euer liued, for he was instructed in the lawe of god by his Counsellors, Daniel & Joseph, and also in all such thinges as pertained to the administration of the Empires and kingdomes that he gouerned.

So that the warre that he had enterprised and taken in hande against the Scythians was iust and right, for it was for no other cause then for defendinge his right, and for to repulse the violence of his enemies. because it is lawfull for a Prince to defende the inuasion of his enemies, and to chase them out of his kingdom, wherefore it appeareth that this barbarous and bloudy fact of Thomiris, is more set out to detest and abhorre hir inhumanitie and crueltie, then blenish or deface the honour and fame of this good and vertuous Prince Cyrus.

The tyrannous fact committed & done by the cruell Fulvia, wife vnto Marcus Antonius,

The dispraise of Women. 84

Anthonius, is no lesse vituperable then the fact of Thomiris, but it seemeth rather moze detestable. For as muche as Thomiris was barberous both of nation and manners, but Fulvia was a Romanaine, by reason whereoff shee ought to haue bene moze humane and lesse bloody.

Crinit. li. 1
Chap. 8. of
honest discipline, & A
plan of A
lexandria,

But notwithstanding this, shee committed and shewed the greatest crueltie that euer was heard off, for after that y^e head of y^e father of eloquence, Cicero, was brought vnto Marcus Anthonius, his great enemy, he made it to be set vpon a table befoze him, and after that he had beheld it a long time and satisfied himselfe vpon this woful spectacle, to the contentation of his minde: then causing it to be taken away from his sight, the cruell Fulvia (as witnesseth Dion of Prucia) toke this same head in hir hands, to the which she did speake a thousande iniurious & reprochfull words, & gaue it infinit curses, after that, she had sundry times spitte in his face, then shee pulled out his tongue, the whiche shee pricked with Pinnes and Needles, vntill

The cruelty
of Fulvia.

¶.iiii. that

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that with this crueltie shee had contented hir minde. This hystory bringeth to my remembraunce an example of y^e most greatest crueltie of a Spanish woman; that euer was committed by woman kinde, the hystory whereoff is most amply and at large set out by Bandel in his tragical Hystories. This woman whereoff we talke was named Violenta, a name not vsfit to hir crueltie, shee being deceiued by a knight of Spaine, named Didaco vnder pretence of Mariage, who giuing his faith and promise vnto hir & confirmed the same by lyinge together, did afterwarde marye with an other Lady.

The hysto-
rie of Vio-
lenta & Di-
daco of
Spaine.

The which when Violenta did vnderstand, how he had falsified his sayth, & beguiled hir, she practised the meane & way to get him to hir house againe, saying, that she would sleep with him & haue his company, & dissemblingly she made a shew as though she knew nothinge of his marriage with his other wife: So that Didaco being enflamed wth his natural heat, did willingly consent and accorde, and being together they passed the daye in
coun-

counterfayte embzallings on the behalfe
of Violenta, vntil that night was come,
this pōze Didaco mistrusting no harme
noz knowing not of y^e secret treasō y^e lūr-
ked in y^e botome of y^e hart of this bloodie
Medea, thought to haue vsed that pūit-
tie, (the which may not lawfully be de-
maunded but in Matrimonye) but shee
did willngly graunt his request, (bi-
cause that befoze they had lyen together
diuers and sundry times) vnder coulour
of Mariadge as it was agreed betwene
them, and in the ptesence of sundry per-
sons.

But she desired respite, for two or
thre houres, that she might take hir rest
and slepe for to comfōrte, hir care and
the better to withstande this amozous
combat pretended. And sayning to take
hir rest, she watched the time that Didac-
co was a slepe. When with the helpe of
a chambermayde of hirs, she strangled
him with a coard. And being altogether
bent to rage and fury, euen lyke Meie-
ra or Thesifonia, she gaue him fīue or
sīxe wounds with a great knife for all
he was dead. And yet not satīsfyng hir

The lyke
cruelty was
neuer heard
that Violē-
ta vsed.

M.v. fellonious

The dispraise of Women.

fellonious heart and wicked intent noz quenching the burning wzath that boyled in hir bzeft, she pulled out his eyes with the poynt of hir knife, and continuing hir rage, she pulled out his tongue and bëing vn-satiable in hir crueltie, she opened his stomacke and pulled out his very heart from his place, then raging and seasing vppon the dead bodge as a famished Lyon vppon his praye, there was almost no part of the body to the which shee gaue not some wounde.

Finally after that she had glutted hir selfe with this cruell spectacle, she with hir handemayde tumbled the dead body out of hir chamber windowe into the stræte, that it might bæe sene the nexte day of all the passers by. The which when they behelde bëing striken with feare, they could, not iudge noz discern whose body it should be, it was so man-gled and chaunged. But notwithstanding at the last this murther bëing confessed and bzought to lyght by hir owne selfe, the punishment folloved, such as shee had deserued. For she was condemned to dye, and executed in the ptesence of
the

the Duke of Calabria sonne vnto Fredericke King of Aragon. But all these cruelties befoze shewed sãme lyttle in comparison of the wicked fellony of the Emperesse Irenia, committed to the person of hir sonne Constantine the sixte Emperour, the which was not as the others, agaynst their enemyes, or against those by whom they had receiued iniuries, but this shee Wolfe or Tygresse, agaynst all ductie of humanitie, and agaynst all naturall right, both diuine & humaine, also worse then the brute beasts, the which will neuer doe harme nor iniury to their young ones. Shee made the same Constantine hir sonne to dye in prison most miserably, after that she had caused his eyes to bee put out, of whose innocencie the firmamēt bare such lamentable witnesse, that the Sun was eclipsed seuentē daies, yea it was so eclipsed & darkened y the ships y were on y sea wer in great daūger, & y cōmon talke went y this obicuritie & darkenes happened for y great wrong & iniury y this raging Tygresse had committed in the person of the Emperour hir sonne.

The

No suche
crueltie as
Irenia the
Emperesse
vsed agāst
hir sonne.
Constantine
y emperor

The dispraise of Women.

The crueltie of the wife of Androwe king of Prouincia.

The barbarous crueltie of the wife of Androwe King of Prouentia, is no lesse detestable : who by the helpe of some of hir chambermaydes , did hang and strangle the sayd Androw hir husbände.

The crueltie of Ariadus.

But yet Ariadus wife to the Emperour Zenon committed greater felony in the person of hir husbände, who hauing vppon a daye taken moze Drincke then he was accustomed, & bæ.ing there with Drunken, was by the commaundement of hir caried alyue and quicke into his tombe and graue , for to disgest his wine, wherein she made him to continue and tarye so long that hee dyed aswell for hunger , as for wante of ayre.

The crueltie of Fredegunda and Brunehant

The thing hadde bene tollerable if this crueltie had remained only in these barbarous & beathē womē, but we read of some of late daies in Christian kingdoms y haue ben equall to thē in all crueltie. Fredegunda & Brunehant (among y Frenchmen) naming themselves Christian women, may be compared to any of these befoze in respect of crueltie, for there

there was neuer none that became enemy to Fredegunda, but that at the last they repented: For she hath bene so far out of order in the execution of hir reuengementes, that with greate payne would she be contented to see the deaths of those that she hated. And she persecuted many Innocents most cruelly, and caused an Archbishop to be slaine in saying diuine seruice.

Bruneant by poyson caused Theodoric to dye, & she became so cruell that Clothaire the seconde, for hir cruelties which wer incomperable made hir to be drawne at a horse taile and most shamefully to be put to death.

If I should stande to describe and set out at large the cruell and detestable doings, of one now lyuing aswell agaynst hir owne husbands as agaynst others, I might of hir alone beginne a larger discourse then of all those that I haue before touched, but for that the memozye thereof is freshly knowne in a manner vnto vs all, I will leaue hir barbarous dealynge to the Iudgement of almighty G D D, but surely if hir libertie
thorough

The dispraye of Women,

through Gods prouidence had not bene restrayned, and the sent miraculously into this Realme, I suppose hir wickednesse would haue far exceeded Iezabel, Athalia, Thomiris, Fulua, Violenta, Irenia, and all the rest befoze named.

¶ Of women Heretickes and of what Herisies they haue bene the occasion. Cap. 7.

Among the prayles of women that is giuen vnto them by y^e famous and learned French wyter Peter Bouaiste, aw, Lorde of Launay, amongst other things hee maynteineth y^e women haue neuer brought error nor sect into the Church of God. But we must rather thinke then otherwise that when this learned man was wryting the excellencies of women, he was so profoundly giuen to extoll their prayles that then hee was not mindefull of that which Saint Iohn y^e Apostle writeth in in y^e .2. chap. of his Apocalips, to y^e messenger of the Congregation

Congregation of Thiatira, saying, I haue a few things agaynst thee, bicause thou sufferest y woman Iezabel, which called hir selfe a false Prophetesse, to teach & to deceiue my seruants, to make them committe fornication, and to eate meate offered by to Idolls. The Apostle by this Iezabel vnderstandeth some woman that woulde bzing in some secte or heresie into the Church of God.

Now although it is rare and seldome knowne that women haue brought errors into the Church, bicause they are not permitted to speake in y congregation nor to minister about holye things. Neuerthelesse there are found a great number of them that haue bene Heretickes, and mayntained most great and dampnable heresies.

And this is certefied vs by Saynt Hierome who writing agaynst the Pelagiens, doth affirme that many heresies haue bene rayled and put forwarde thozoughe the ayde and meanes of womanne, the whiche coulde not bee without theyr pꝛeuocation.

And for this cause, he calleth them poore miserable

Many heresies haue bene put in practise by the helpe of women.

S. Hierome

The dispraye of Women.

miserable women laden with sinne, led and guyded through diuers cogitations and euil thoughts & which are alwayes learning somewhat, but they can neuer come noꝝ atteine to the knowledge of the truth: so then it appeareth that women haue bene the occasion of heresies.

Symon the
enchantor.

Nicolas of
Antioche.

Marcio the
hereticke.

Appelles
and Philo-
menas his
woman.

Prisca and
Maximilla
mainteining
the heresie
of Montanus.

Donat the
hereticke

Agapa.

It is said that Symon Magus the en-
chauntoꝝ raysed vp an heresie beeing
therebnto prouoked and helped by one
Hellin an harlot. Nicholas of Antioch,
giuen to all filthie vncleanenesse had
great company of women. Martion that
Hereticke sent to Rome befoze he came
thether a woman, foꝝ to tourne the
mindes of those whome he pretended to
deceiue and to cast into the pitte of er-
rour. Appelles had a woman named
Philomena which was a cōpaniō of his
wicked doctines. Prisca and Maximil-
la rich women wer the cause why Mon-
tanus that bragged he had & holy Ghost,
did infect many churches. Donat sedu-
ced a greate number of men in Africa
by the meanes of Lucilla a common wo-
man. In Spayne Agapa did guyde the
poꝝe blynde Ellipides into the pitte and
cause

cause of error. Insomuch that saint Hierome concludeth that the misery of iniquitie is done and accomplished by both kindes.

The ecclesiasticall Historie maketh mention of Zotecus the Bishop of Camania, how he made the spirit of error that was in Maxemilla to cease, shewing and declaring manifestlye that his soothsaying and divination was most false, as when shee woulde foretell and shew of great and perillous warres to be euen at hand, yet for all his saying, there came none, for the world was in peace and tranquillitie for the space and time of thirteene years after this prediction, and when this fantasticall woman said, that she prophesied, Zoticus the Bishop caused the spirite that was within him to cease and to keepe silence. Epiphanius a Bishop, in his booke that he made against heresies, sheweth of a great superstition & heresie that was sometimes raised vnder the name of the virgin Mary, by certein women of Arabia, of Thracia, & of Scithia, & which women would take a square stoule, in manner and sozme

Euseb. li. 5
cap. 1. & 18

Li. 3 tome.
2. heresis. 79

The dispraise of Women.

of a Table the whiche shoulde bee
couered with a fayre white linnen
cloth spread vpon the same a certein day
in the yeare, vpon the which they sette
bread, the which they participate among
them all, and offer it vnto the virgine
Mary in honour of hir . And this is
reproued in them as a wicked and
damnable heresie, also it apperteyneth
not to any one woman whatsoeuer, al-
though shee bee of neuer so holy a lyfe,
to haue the vse and ministering of holy
thinges, but she is commaunded to kepe
silence and to holde hir peace in the
Congregation and Church of God . By
this yee may see, y women haue brought
in errors and haue bene heretickes
themselues . For when they goe about
to degenerate and fall from their natu-
ral inclination, and giue ouer themselues
to their owne affections , they become
not onely equall to men in superstition
and in other thinges, but also
they haue farre exceeded and
outpassed them in all
kinde of here-
sies.

Of

¶ Of the vnchast and loose lyfe of some women. Cap. 8.

WE are now farre entered into the filthy and vnclean stable of Augeas, seeing y we are come to the lothsome and vnchast life of some women, y which although they haue the key of honour in their hands, yet neuertheles leauing honour and forgetting the duetie of their conscience, they let themselues be led & guided where vertue & reason is repugned and reiected. In such manner y the fame of their lewde liuing is come and spread euen in this age, wherein there are found so many womē, that haue set their honour at naught, & left it at randal, and are become so vncontinēt, y if all y parts and members of my body were conuerted & turned into tongues, it should not be for al that, sufficient for me, for to expresse the least part of their vnchast and wicked doings, specially of those y plant hoynes in their husbandes heades, of whose craftie and deceitfull dealinges, Bocas in the seauenth Booke of his Decameron, hath so at large spoken off,

The dispraise of Women.

as by his instruction it appeareth, there be many such lyke, whether it be either thorough loue or to auoyde anye flaunder, lyke to the women of America, that goe starke naked without any shame. But before I take in hand to speak of those in our time, I wil first declare and shew the disordinate loues of some in times past, to see who haue excelled others in such kinde of folly.

Phrinia by
giuing ouer
hir body to
whoredom
got such a
sum of mo-
ney & she
offered to
build the
walls of
Thebes.

And first I will beginne with the sayre Phrinia, who thorough the losse-
nesse of hir body, and giuing it ouer to
fleshly desires, dyd get and gather toge-
ther such a summe & masse of Money & she
offered to repayre and bulde vpp the
great length of the walles of the Ci-
tie of Thebes, the which in circuite and
compasse hadde one hundred gates.

This I say she offered, without asking
any other recompence of the Citizens,
but onely that they woulde suffer hir
name to be engrauen for a memoire
of hir doinges in certeyne places of
the wall, with this deuise and saying.

Alexander hath throwne downe, and
Phrinia hath builded vp.

It is a thing no lesse to be wondered and meruayled at, the which Herodotus sheweth, that one of the Piramides of Aegypt, was edified and builded of the gaine that proceeded of the vnchast body of the daughter of king Cleops, who demaunded no other thinge of them that laye with hir, but onely one stone.

One of the Piramides of Aegypt was edified with y^e money y^e proceeded of y^e impudicitie of a young woman.

But who would not meruayle of those, that coulde make the most renowned Philosophers in y^e world to swarue and fall. For Socrates was not so well armed with his science, that he coulde keep himselfe from amorous flames and passions that Aspasia the harlot did present vnto him.

Socrates & his Aspasia.

Archenasia after that shee had giuen ouer hir selfe in hir youth to all comers, and being forsaken in hir age, she coulde for all that so flatter & blinde the eyes of the diuine Plato, that he not onely loued hir, but also lamented that he could not ryd himselfe and absteine from louing so olde & withered an harlot. And Hermia did so well enflame Aristotle in hir loue, that he consumed by the sight of hir, when he was with hir.

Plato & his Archenasia.

Aristotle & his Hermia.

⁴⁰
In he dispraise of Women.

Lais.

Lais the most renowned harlot that euer was, woulde baunt and make hir boast, that the most famous Philosophers went to hir schole and became in loue with hir, for shee was so perfectly accomplished with beautie and other graces and fauours of nature, and shee dyd sing so pleasauntly, that there was no man but was rauished with hir voice and beautie, the which shee shewed and gaue to vnderstand by experience, when shee so charmed king Pyrrhus and other great and mightie Lordes, that they consumed and dyed by hir, and shee so well knew how to profite by hir lones, that shee so polled hir louers that shee left the nothing but onely their voyces for to declare their passions. This Lais was daughter to a Priest of the Temple of Apollo, who was so expert in magicke, that straght after the birth of his daughter, he foresheved hir perdition.

Flora.

The Italian Flora, who was young fayre and rich, for that she put hir honoz and gaue ouer hir bodye to those that would pay wel, & not to common people,
but

but onely to Princes and great Lordes,
the which she deceiued and caught them
in hir net by the sweetnesse of hir elo-
quence, & she at hir gate had a table hang-
ing wherin was witten, King, Prince,
Dictator, Consul, Censour, Bishop, & Que-
stor, may enter here. Also Lamia ha-
ving cast hir wanton eye vpon king Des-
metrius, she so caught him in hir snare,
y^e hee liued onely thorough hir, insomuch
that he forsaked his wife Euxonia for to
follow this amorous harlot Lamia.

But what shal we say of y^e vnshame-
fast and detestable doinges of Anila, of
whom it is sayd that Eumedes solde his
beale flesh deerer in his Shambels, then
this infamous and shamelesse harlot did
the innocent virgins in hir house. How
lothsome is it to heare speake of y^e impu-
dicity of Thuringia, who vpon a day wold
fall to counting of hir louers, & for that
she could not count them with hir fin-
gers, she called for a bushell of pease to
count them with. I will leaue speaking
of Pasiphila, Nico, Gnathena, and
innumerable others that in their lyfe
time, dyd no other thinge then make
P.iii. p.rose

Lamia,

Anila,

Thuringia,
did call for
a bushell of
pease to
count hir
louers with

The dispraise of Women.

A Senatship
of vvomen
harlots in
Rome.

prosse and tryall of what temper & darts
of loue were, the whiche suffered them-
selues to take roote in vnlawfull & dis-
honest loue, that the fruit that proceeded,
became altogether & corrupting of their
persons, and nowe will I say somewhat
of the impudencie of & Romain daines,
the which hadde their honour and good
name in so small estimation, that they
were not ashamed to haue a Parliament
and Senatshippe of women that were
impudent and wicked, the which made
lawes & ordinaunces touching the fact of
loue & of whordome, to the great disho-
nour of the estate of holy wedlock. In &
which Senate of Harlottes, the chiefe
president was, Semyamira, the wyfe of
Heliogabelus, the filthy and abhominable
Emperour. The ordinaunces and
lawes that were ordeyned and made in
this diuelish and whozish Senate, I
doe abhorre to rehearse, although they
be described and set out at large by one
Peter Crynnet, in his booke of honest
discipline, for the declaring thereof, is so
dishonett, that it had bene better not to
haue wasted ynke and paper about it.

But

But who would not also wonder of the vnshamefast doing of Leoncia, who tooke vppon hir most presumptiously to write and make booke against the learned Theophrastus for the approuing of fornication and whoredome against the holy ordinaunces of mariage.

Why was also the infamous Venus taken for a goddess among the olde and auncient Idolaters, but onely for that in the Ilande of Cypres, shee was the first amongst women, that inuented and attempted to breake the bondes of holy wedlocke, and caused the maydes to get their dowrie money, by giuing ouer their bodies, a pray to all commers.

The which being knowne by that famous harlotte Rhodope, she caused hir loue to be so profitable, that she gathered together so much riches by giuing ouer hir bodye, y she caused to be made and buylded the third Pyramides of the Aegyptians.

And Thais of Corinthia did so a uagale in hir youth, that she gaue ouer hir body to none but to Kings, Princes, and great Lords.

The dispraise of Women.

Massalina
the most in-
famous yvo
man that e,
162 1738

But Massalina wife vnto the Em-
perour Claudus did errede in impuden-
cie and dishonour all the harloties and
common women that wer in the world.
For vpon a day she went to the stews
and caused to be chosen out the most fa-
mous Courtisan that was in the stews
and made hir impudicitie to contende
and strue with hirs, but Massalina wan
the pzice, for she had sustained and en-
dured the compauy of .25. Ruffians
more then the Courtisan in beastly plea-
sure, in such sort y it is sayd of hir that
she came from the stews not satisfied
nor sufficientlve contented with the
companye of men.

**Semphro-
nia.**

Semphronia notwithstanding that
she was learned aswell in the Greeke
as in the Latine tongues was neuer-
thelesse most impudent.

Sapho.

Sappho the inuentrice of the Saphick
verses was in loue with Phaon, & could
not be withdrawne from hir voluptu-
ous loue for all hir knowledge, no more
then Leoncia that was in loue with the
Philosopher Methrodore.

But it sufficed not those women to
runne

runne into their owne destruction, but the mischief is come to such ende, that they haue so bewitched men with their lasciuious loue, that they haue left vndone many worthy deedes, and done many faire and excellent deedes, and not attayned to them, being snared in the snares, & chayned in the chaines of loue.

Many valiant persons haue left vndone many worthy deedes and haue bene made thralle and subiect to womens loue.

Pea the most renomed in knowledge, and the most valiant and worthy in times past. As Methridates was in Pontus, Hanibal in Capua, Cæsar in Alexandria, Demetrius in Grecia, Marcus Antonius in Aegypt.

Also Hercules did leaue great enterprizes for the loue of Yola, that withdrew him, and he became a seruant to Omphalia, to serue hir as a chambermayde.

Achillès forsook the battayle, for the loue of Polixena, Circes kept Vliesses for going into his countrey, Claudus did remayne prisoner for the loue of Virginia, Cæsar was stayed by Cleopatra, who also dealt vnfaithfully with hir husbande Marcus Antonius.

Tiberius

The dispraise of Women.

Tiberius
was in great
perplexi-
on for the
whoredoms
of Iulia his
wyfe.

Tiberius the Emperour did espouse
and mary Iulia, the daughter of Augu-
stus, who neuerthelesse was so infa-
mous by hir disordinate and manifest
whoredomes that the sayd Tiberius for
that he durst not accuse hir, neyther
chastice nor correct hir, nor cause hir to
refrayne, he went to Rhodes, and there
kept himselfe, not without great shame
and infamy to his name and daunger of
his lyfe.

The impu-
dency of
Faustina,
the disho-
nest answer
of Popilla.

Marcus Aurelius the famous Phi-
losopher and valiant Emperour, did take
to wife Faustina the daughter of An-
thonius Pius, the most impudent of all
women next to Popillia the daughter of
Marke, who vppon a time being asked
why that brute beasts doe not receyue
the male but at one time of the yeare, &
a woman at all times and seasons. What
is sayde she because they be but beasts
without iudgement, reason and vnder-
standing. Now seeing y women do for-
get God their maker, & that they suffer
themselves to be ledde whether their
own sensuall desires doth moue and pro-
uoke them, and also doe loose the bands
and

and lette slippe the bridell, to all kinde of bayne and wanton loue, she becometh worse then the vntamed and senselesse brute beasts.

Whereof Saynt Hierome repeateth an example worthe of reining, braunce in an Epistle that he writeth to Vital a Priest, saying that there was a woman for charities sake, tooke a man childe out of an hospitall, the which she nourished as hir owne proper sonne, and had him to lye with hir euery nighte in hir bedde, the which childe when it was come to the age of tenne yeares, she was filled with such incontinencie, that she ioyned with him carnally.

An impudent vvo-
ma became
greater to
child against
all naturall
order by a
boy of ten
yeares of
adge.
S. Hierome
to Vital.

In such manner, that agaynst all nature and order she became great with childe, although that nature doth not permitte nor suffer, that man maye engender at ten yeares of age.

But this was the permission of G D D, to the ende, that the dishonest and vurchast dowings of this wicked woman might come to leght and be manifest to the whole world.

Sebastian Munster in his Cosmographic

The dispraise of Women.

The impu-
dēcy of Ma-
ry of Ara-
gon.

graphie, writeth of Mary of Aragon
wife to the Emperour Otho the thirde,
who was so impudēt, & she caried about
ordinarily wth hir a young man clothed
in womē's raiment, with whom she had
company euery day, vntil that the Em-
perour hauing knowledge thereof,
caused him to be burnt, but he pardo-
ned his wife.

Shoryes
wyfe.

Nevertheless she continued in hir
wickednesse still, & was also at the last
burned. I will not stande to reapeate
histories of our tyme, of such as haue
resembled Shoryes wife that pleasaunt
concubine, whose ende was very shame
and beggerly for all the was a Kings
Paramour.

Faire Ag-
nes.

Neither of the fayre Agnes that was
Concubine vnto & French King Charles
the seuenth, but she so profited by hir
loue, that she made hir will and testa-
ment when she dyed, that it came to
sixtie thousande Crownes, which may
be eightēne thousand pounds sterlyng,
and also she made all hir kindred
rich.

I wil conclude this matter with the
history

history of Pharon king of Aegypt, the which became blynde the space of ten yeares, but he did aske counsaile of the Oracle for to know if that there were no remedy for to recover his sight.

A notable historie of a king of Aegypt y^e was blinde, to whome counsaile was geuen for to recover his sight so vvas his eyes to vvas mans water that neuer had carnall company vvith any other then his husband, and vvhat payne he had to fynd one.

To whom aunswere was made that his sight was to be recovered with washing his eyes with a womans vyne that neuer had carnal company with no other, but with hir owne husbande.

He being returned to his Pallace thought first to proue it in his owne wife, but it would not serue his tourne, then he tryed a great number of others but all in vayne.

And so manye was tryed, that at the last there was founde but one alone the which had not broken hir faythe and promise in maryage.

Whome Pharon did take to wife, hauinge by hir meanes recovered his sight.

And he caused his other wife to be burned, and all the others, whose vyynes in vayne he hadde tryed

The dispraise of Women.

In consideration whereoff the auncient Romaines minding to bryde the incontinencie of their wiues, they gaue authoritie to men that shoulde take them with such a faulte, to depriue their wiues of their lyues, the which Lawe did so tame those that were insolent women, that the feare of deathe didde aswage and quench their disordinate desire.

¶ Of women Sorcerers and of their Sorceries and Witchcraftes. Cap. 9.

Because that women are more curious to search and know secrets, and more giuen to bayne superstition then men, they are therfore the more easie to bee beguyled and deceyued by wicked spirites, and by this meanes they are more enclyned to Sorcerie and Witchcraft, through whose meanes, the Diuell hath oftentimes giuen aunswere. As appeared in Delphos, where there was a caue verie deepe, and

why women
are more gi
uen to for
cery and
witchcraft
then men.

and when any came to aske counsayle of the Oracle, a woman would sit in a chaire aboue the caue and woulde tell thinges to come, and in the meane time, ther proceeded from the caue oꝛ pit great smoake, with thundering and windes, then after wards, such Oracles and answers were registred and put in writing by the Priests of Apollo, & because that such reuelations were doubtfull and might be vnderstanded two manner of wayes, the diuell byd the easier deceyue mankind and beguyle the worlde by these doubtfull answers of these women.

V Women
giue answers
in Delphos to
such as come
to consult
with the
Oracle.

We read in y^e Scripture of a woman in Endor, y^e had the spirit of divination and southsaying, who called by the spirit of Samuel that was dead, the which she did by hir sozcery & witchcraft, not that she raysed by the spirite of the Prophet Samuel, but the spirite of the diuell that obtained the fruite of this deceite of his, by the Sozcery of this Witch, who was an instrument for Sathan the Diuell.

1. kings. cap
28.

Eusebius in his pꝛeperation to the

D.

Gos

The dispraise of Women.

Sathan toke
acquaintāce
vvith y in
fideles vnder
the name of
Hecata.
Italian vvo
men y mix
ed certeine
poisons
vvith chese
the vvich
they gaue
to such as
passed by,
and they
vvere con-
uerted into
Mares.

Gospell doth recite that the wicked spi-
rit was so familiar amongst the heathē,
that vnder the name of Hecata a witch,
he hath oftentimes giuen answeres and
foreshewed things to come to those that
would inuocate & cal vpon Hecata. But
that which I go about now to rehearse
woulde seeme to be a very fable and vn-
true, if it were not certified by Sainct
Augustine, that is, that there were in
his time in Italy, certeine women, the
which would giue to such as passed by,
certeine poisons mixed w chese, where-
off so soone as they had tasted & eaten,
they were transfozmed and turned into
Mares, and carped burthens vpon their
backes when they were loden. At Pauia
ther was vpon a. 50. 02. 60. yeares ago, a
Sorcerer, the which could neither write
nor reade, yet notwithstanding by hir se-
crete Arte, shee knew all that was done
in the citie, although it were neuer so
secret.

I haue hearde saye, that at the Citie
of Paris vpon an eightēne yeares past,
there was a certeine personage of
greate learninge that read openlye in
scholes,

scholles, and hē woulde certeynely declare manye times that his Mother, whome hē called Iehocana, which had neuer learned Greeke, Hebrewē, nor Latine, nor anye other language nor letter in the booke, yet notwithstanding hir knowledge was so greate and eminent in the same, that touchinge diuine matters, and secreete doctrine that hath bene hidde since these thre thousand yeares, and known but to the seauentye two intrepertoys of Moses, and vnkowne vnto the Latines, when hē tourned the Zohar, whiche is a very harde booke wrytten in Hebtewe, and conteyning the auncient and most certeyne and sure doctrine Euangelicall, the whiche hē dyd reade but certeyne times, but his Mother dyd expounde it vnto him, and interpreted the meaninge thereof, and shē sayde that it was the spirite of G D D that dyd reueale it vnto hir, and also that Bahir and the Recanari booke wold teach him the rest. And hē affirmed that the exercise of this Iehocana his Mother was chieselye at Venice,

The fantasie
sticall opinion of a
reader in
these dayes
that saide y
a woman
that could
read nei
ther Greeke
Latin nor
Hebrew did
for all that
instruct &
interpret y
Scriptures

The dispraise of Women.

and befoze at Padua. But what he ment by this Iehocana it could not be known, but that some iudged that it was some woman Sozcerer that reuealed all this vnto him, although she coulde neither write nor read. But yet notwithstanding she knew much moze of things then euer did Canidia, Sagapena, or Aglaonice, daughter to Aemon that pulled the Moone out of the Sky, or Alruna that foreshewed so many thinges to king Marconir, that is to wit, howe he should rule and gouerne, and befoze whome she caused to appeare a horrible and grisly sight. But all these are but poze Ideots in respect of this Iehocana.

Canidia.
Sagapena.
Aglaonice.
Alruna.

There is an other manner of women **Witches**, which are much to bee feared, & which wil giue poisons to those that do esteeme of them, and make them pine to death, and to this matter Aulugelus repeateth a iudgement that was giue by Arcopagites of Athens, against a womā that was accused to haue killed hir husband, in this manner. It is sayd y a woman Sozcerer was brought befoze

Aulugelus.
li. 12. cap. 7.
of his attri-
call mightes

The dispraise of Women. 99

before Cneus Dolabella in the time that he was Proconsull and Liuetenant in Asia, which woman was accused that she had killed hir second husband that she had marped, the which she confessed was very true, but hee himselfe had first ministered the occasion, bycause that a gaynst all right and reason, hee had killed hir onely sonne, which she hadde by hir first husband, & that the very griefe that she had receyued for y^e fact, did cause hir to worke this mischief agaynst hir seconde husbande, by hir art of Magicke. After that Dolabella had heard hir confession, he woulde not iudge hir but sent hir examination to the Areopagites, equall Iudges and reputed for the most iustest Iudges in the world, who by their iudgement gaue sentence that after that a hundreth yeares were expired, the accuser of this woeman and she also, shoulde appeare agayne for to haue ryght shewed.

The iudgement of the Areopagites vpon a womā witch

And by this meanes she was not onely quitte of hir Witchcraft, for the whiche by the lawes she had deserved death, but also she was not pu-

The dispraise of Women.

ished bycause that his misdowinge dyd merite and deserue pardon.

The death
of y^e Empe-
rour Otho
the third by
a paire of
poisoned
gloues.

Mynster in his Cosmographie maketh mencion of the wyse of one named Crescence, who presented Otho the Emperour with a payre of Gloues, the which after y^e he had smelled to, he dyed by the force of the poison wherewith the sayd gloues were infected.

A woman
that was
burnt by
causing a
king to
pine to
death by an
Image of
wax that
she made.

And Gawyn rehearseth of an Image of ware whiche was made by Witchcrafte, representinge the French kinge Charles de Valois, for to make him dye and consume and pine awaye by a lingeringe deathe, even as the Image of Ware beinge sette nere the fire shoulde consume and wast awaye, and this was procured by the meanes of a woeman named Claudia wyse vnto one named Panior suspected to be a Witch, vsinge Witchcraft and for this cause shee was burned.

And of these sorte of Witches as it dothe daylye appeare there are a number in this Realme of Engelande,

The dispraise of Women. 100

lande, and they haue consumed manye,
as well noble men as others, thozough
this former kinde of dealinge, as wee
maye daylye see by experyence by
suche as haue bene consumed, and
there are fewe Assises nowe a dayes, but
that some for Witchcraft are conuic-
ted and condemned to dye in euerye
theere and countrey.

The woemen in times past that
were giuen to this Diuellishe Arte,
dyd worshippinge the first inuentrice of
the same as a Goddess, which was He-
cata, and hir daughter Circes, the which
Philostratus nameth the Goddess of
diuinations, to the whiche also their
Sister Medea was not vnequall.

Circes the
Goddess of
witches &
Sorcerers.

Likewise in Rome this venemous
and poysoned Arte was so polwzed out,
in the dayes of the Consulles Marcus
Claudus, Marcellus, and Titus Vale-
rius, that as (witnessteth Orosius) there
was .380. Matrones of Rome con-
demned to dye, bicause of their Soz-
ceres and Witchcraftes, amonge
the whiche there was Cornelia and
D.iiii. Seruil-

Orosius. li. 3
cap. 10.

The dispraise of Women.

Seruillia, Romaine Dames, vnto whom they made to drinke the potions and drinks y they had prepared for others, making the to practise the law Rhemia. Before which time I doe not finde any lawe for the punishment of Coniurers and Witches, the which in Persia is punished after this manner, that is, that they make those that are condemned for such thinges to lay their face downe vppon a great flat stone, & with an other stone that they let fall, they beate & pass out their bzaines, and with this paine was punished Sygea the mayde seruant to Satira, whome she had caused to dye through hir Witchcrafts, as Plutarchus witnesseth in the lyfe of Artaxerxes.

But amongst all women, the women of Thessalia beare the name, touchinge coniurations and Witchcraftes, so that it is a Proverbe and by word, when any woman is noted to be a notable witch, she is called a Thessalian, and this hath take original & beginning of Medea, who as the fable of hir doth report, when she was fugitive, she left a coffer full of hir Sorceries and Magicall hearbs, y which be

How the
witches of
Persia are
punished.

The womē
of Thessa-
lia greatly
defamed for
their Sorce-
rye and
witchcraft.

The dispraise of Women. 101

beeing sowen, did fructifie and encrease
so wel; that all the countrey was reple-
nished therewith.

Rodogin maketh mention of cer-
teine women that are **Witches** the
which are called by vs **Fayries**, of
whom the **Quene** is named **Melusin**,
and it is sayd that they are desirous of
mans flesh, and therefore they eate lyt-
tle childzen, such were **Erieto**, mentio-
ned by **Lucan**, **Mirhenia** by **Apuleius**,
and **Dipsa** by **Ouid**. But bicause wee
haue sufficiently spoken of such matters
in an other place, we will forbear now
at this present, to speake any more
thereoff.

Lib. 15. cap.
39. Of the
Fayries.

¶ Of the deceiueable and false
doings of some women.
Cap. 10.

If all the deceitfull and craftie do-
ings of women which they do ac-
customably vse when they will beguyle
men, were lyke to the craftie and honest
pollycie that **Mary the Quene of Ara-
gon** vled to the King hir husbände,
they

The honest
deceite of
Marye
Queene of
Aragon

D. b.

The dispraise of Women.

they should be woꝛthy of great prayſes, foꝛ ſhe perceiuing that the King hir huſbande gaue himſelfe to the company of other women and did bꝛeake his ſayth in wedlocke, ſhee founde the meanes thꝛough the fauour of a Chamberlayne who was the chief miniſter of the kings loues, who vnder the coulour of ſome beautifull Lady that the King hadde a minde vnto, bzought the Quene ſecretly to lye with the king hir huſbande, (who being abuſed by other women, did diſdayne the company of his wife.)

But this was done ſo ſecretly that the King thought verely he had lye with ſome other ſtraunge woman. And when the day began to appeare, the king foꝛ his honours ſake would haue had hir to depart and withdraue hir ſelfe, but ſhee ſayd, ſhee would not ſtirre one ſote, vntill ſhe had ſomewhat of him woꝛthy of remembꝛaunce, to teſtifie that ſhee hadde lye that night with the king.

The king being overcome with this honeſt pollycie and deuice, did euer afterwarde loue the Quene his wife pꝛaiſing

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praising hir greatly for this hir honest
chiste, and within .ix. moneths after she
was deliuered of a sonne in the yeare.
1196.

And the Father and Mother not
knowing what name to giue the childe,
they caused twelue torches to be ligh-
ted, every one bearing the name of an
Apostle, with this determination that
the first torch that should goe out, the
childe should be named by the name of
that Apostle that the torch did beare the
name off. Now it chaunced that the
torch dedicated to Saynt Ieames went
first out, and by this meanes, the childe
was named Ieames, the which Apostle
the Aragonnoies haue in greate reue-
rence.

I would wish with al my heart that
all the deceipts of women were lyke vnto
this, for a truth the estate of humaine
things would be far better.

But when I doe consider the can-
tells, craftes and subtil dealinges of
women, not onely of times past, but al-
so of time present, I cannot but bewaile
the estate and wickednesse of thinges
which

Cantells

The dispraise of Women.

Which goe so vntowardly and cleane contrary to kinde, that man, which is endued with a gentle minde naturally, must be broughte into such slauerye and thraldome, as to bee subiect to the deceits of so frayle & contemptible a kinde as is a woman. And yet neuerthelesse shee hath deceiued and beguyled the mightiest men of the world, as it appeared by Adam, Dauid, Salomon, and other worthy men, that haue bene snared and entangled by the craftie deceits of women. As Hercules that daunted Monsters, was notwithstanding overcome by a woman.

Sampson deceived by
Dallila.
Iudges. 13.

The histories are full of such examples of fraudes, treasons, and circumventions that dayly and houely are committed by women, as appeareth by the history of Dallila, who vnderstanding y^e all Sampsons strength laye in his haire, she founde the meanes to make him to sleepe in hir lappe, the which when hee did, she shaued them off with a razor, which being done, his strength fayled him.

But among all the craftie and subtil dealinges

The dispraise of Women. 103

dealyngs of women, I suppose there can be none moze grater, no: that may be compared vnto the deceite that Fredegunda vsed agaynst a Quene of Fraunce, the hystorie whereoff is in this manner.

King Chilpericke the seconde, going for to giue ayde & succour vnto his brother Sigisbert agaynst the Almaines, did committe the keeping of the Quene his wife, named Andonera, which was great with childe, and gaue the charge of hir vnto Fredegunda during his absence: Who after that she had receiued this gracious charge, it came to passe, that the Quene within a while after beeing deliuered of a faire daughter, did aske counsaile of Fredegunda to know whome she should take for Godmothers to giue hir childe baptisme. Fredegunda beeing y most subtillest woman in those dayes, did shew the Quene that there could be found none in the world so fit as she hir selfe, for seeing she was hir bodely Mother, she ought also to be hir ghostly and spiritual Mother, and helpe to regenerate hir.

The deceit
that Frede-
gunda vsed
agaynst a
quene of
France.
Gauvyn in
his Croni-
cles.

But

The dispraye of Women.

But the good and simple Quene for quicke of beleefe, thought nothing lesse then of the craftie and subtile intent of Fredegunda, so that creditinge hir wordes, shee helped to christen hir daughter, and was both Mother and Godmother.

30. question
1. Canon.
Peruenire.

Now the ende of Fredegundas craftie intent was to seporate and break the knotte of mariage that was betwene Chilpericke and his Quene Andonera, bicause that the Lawes and Decrees of the Romaine Church was, that the maryage betwene Cossippes, I meane betwene Godfathers and Godmothers was straytely forbidden bicause of the spirituall allyaunce the which they saye is contracted by this Cosseship, and by this means Fredegūda obtained y^e fruit of hir false deceite, hauing perswaded Andonera to giue vnto hir little daughter the Sacrament of holy Baptisme, the which Andonera did, & named hir daughter Chilchinda.

After which Baptisme, Chilpericke being returned from the warre, Fredegunda very ioyfull and glad thereof went

The dispraise of Women. 104

Went to meete him, to whom she showed that he was Father of a very fayre daughter, whereoff the Quene was deliuered in his absence, but she was very sozry for that the Quene was become Godmother vnto hir owne daughter.

Chilpericke vnderstanding this newes, did sweare that if it were so in dede, that his wife had chystened hir owne daughter, that he would vtterly forsake hir and mary Fredegunda. Chilpericke entering into his Pallace, the Quene Andonera came befoze him for to doe him reuerence and to vse such amiable embzassings and kissings as women accustomedly vse to their husbands, when they haue bene long absent. But Chilpericke looking with a frowning countenance like god Mars vpon the queen, beganne to vtter and say vnto hir very angerly.

O thou foolish and vnfortunate Lady how commmeth it to passe that thou, thzough thine owne follye hast soughte to seperate thy selfe from mee, and to breake the bondes of our Patri-
mony.

And

The dispraye of Women.

Chilperick
dyd forsake
the queene
his lawfull
wyfe for
to mary
Fredegūda

Chelperick
was slayne
by the means
of Fredegū,
42.

And shortly after he banished the Bishop that christened the childe and sent him to exile, and caused the good Lady Andonera to be closed vp in a religious house at Mans, and so forsooke hir company and cast hir off, leauing for hir and hir daughter an yearely pension, and he maryed Fredegunda as he had promised, who afterwarde was the cause of greate troubles in Fraunce, by the meanes whereoff the house of Chilpericke was neuer without a disease, and running sore. And at the last Fredegunda caused Chilpericke to be slayne, returning from the chase, and therefore it is sayd:

A craftie wife, will breede much strife:
And through hir way, all things decay:
And euill will fall, vppon them all,
That to hir lore, enclyne shall.

The saying
of Marcus
Aurelius.

Marcus Aurelius knowing well the subtilties of women, sayd, that manye great and notable personages that are dead would not reuiue and rise agayne for to be conuersant among women.

As.

As Philip king of Macedonia, with Olimpia, Paris, with Helena, Alexander with Roxana, Socrates wth Xanthippe, Aeneas with Dido, Hanibal with Thas mira, Anthony wth Cleopatra, Iulius Cæsar with Domitia, & Nero with Agrippina, ffor the p^{ro}uerbe sayth, the Oxe is bozne to labour the earth, the Hawke to flye, the Greyhound to hunt, the Ass to the burthen, the horse to the warre, the Ape to shew pleasure, the fat Henne ffor the kitchin, the man to vertue and honesty, the woman to fraude, deceite & mischief.

¶ A conclusion of the malice & wickednesse of women. Cap. II.

By dayly experience we doe know and vnderstande, that when women will apply their mindes and knowledge that nature hath giuen thē, to any other thing then vertue, then there is neither fraude, treason, craft nor subtiltie, wherevnto they do not attaine. This is y^e cause why they haue ben excluded from meddling in ecclesiasticall matters, and put by from

p. poli.

The dispraise of Women.

politicke gouernement, not for bicause that women want reason & iudgement, but bicause it is vnseemely, and it doth not become them to meddle in affayres belonging to the comon wealth, bicause of hir vnconstancie and mutabilitie, the which from time to time hath bene obserued & kept. For when that Neptune and Minerua were in controuersie and debate, for giuing the name to Athens, there was made three lawes & ordinaunces against women. The first, that children should not bee named by their mothers names. The second, that neuer any woman should rule & gouerne the comon weale. The third, that no woman should be named or called an Athenienne, but Attiqua. Peruerthelesse since that time, there hath bene some women that haue ruled and pleaded matters at Rome, vntill the time that Calphurina hauing lost a cause and matter, for the which she was spitefully angry against the Iudges, that vncouering hir nakednesse behinde, shee in reproch and contempt of their iudgement, shewed them hir buttocks, for the which cause it was
ordai

Three aunci-
ent lawes a-
gainst yuo-
men.

The vnshā-
st & info-
lent doinge
of Calphu-
rina, was
cause y^e ple-
ding was
for euer for
bidden wo-
men.

The dispraise of Women. 106

ordeined & established, that frō thence
foorth no woman should plead any cause,
& euer after that the barre was forbiden
them.

But hee that hath not had experience
of the wickednesse of women, let him
reade that whiche Marcus Aurelius
hath written, and hee shall finde that
neuer any man dyd moze sette out their
lightnesse, vnconstrancie, obstinate, im-
pudencie, selfe will, trechery, subtil-
tie, deceite, with other their infirmities,
whiche vnto them is naturall and com-
mon, the whiche hath made this great
Orator so to exclaime of them in his
wozkes, that euery man may perceine
and vnderstande, that the woman, see-
meth to haue bene made and brought
out into the woꝛlde for no other cause,
but for to bere and torment men, and
to putte into their memoꝛye and re-
membꝛaunce, all kinde of euills, mis-
chiefes, and miseries, for the euill wo-
man may cause moze hurtē and harme
then the raginge Sea maye doe with
his waues, moze consume and burne,
then fire it selfe, moze harme and mis-

There is
none that
hath better
set foorth
honor and
naturall in-
clination of
women, as
Marcus Au-
relius hath
done.

The dispraise of Women.

cheife the pouertie can bring a man vnto, moze consume, wast, and spoyle, then the warre, and moze to destroye and kill the death it selfe can do. For to vse craft, to vse folly, to break sayth, to faine, to deceiue and beguile, to flatter, to be angry, to pranke vpon hir body, to make a bed, & to vndoe, is all that a woman can doe.

The Muses
are named
with the
name of wo-
men, but so
are the infer-
nal spirites
also.

Whose which for a singuler prayse of women, haue in times past attributed vnto them names, doe likewise attribute vnto the Muses, the names of womē, as Caliope, Clio, Euterpe, Thalia, Polymnia, Thepsichore, Erate, Melopomene, Vrania. But by the like meane and for an extreme and perpetuall ignominy and reproch, they haue also attributed names of women vnto the infernal spirites, as Alecto, Megæra, Tethysiphonia, to the Harpyes, as Aello, Ocipeta, Celæno, to the Gorgones, as Stenio, Euriale, Medusa, and to the fatall Goddesses, as Clotho, Lachesis, and Atropos, and not the names of men, for to denounce and shewe that singularly they are friendes to honour and louers of vertue, and that women in all malice, craftes,

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craftes, and deceites, doe outpasse and
excell them.

For the Epigram sayth.

No greater plague thē an enuious wife?
None to inuent lyes hath so good skil?
To deceiue olde & young, none so rife?
Exāple, Dauid, Salomō, Sāpsō, & virgil.

Wē sē that nature hath putte the
strength in diuers partes of the body, as
the Eagle in hir bill or becke, the Bul in
his hoines, the Serpent in hir taile, the
Dogs in their teeth, the Doves in their
wings, and the woman in hir tongue.
But as Marcus Aurelius sayd, all vene-
mous beastes haue not so much poison in
all their whole bodyes, as one wicked
woman hath in hir tongue. The which
is verified to vs by the Histories of the
wiues of Iob, Thoby, Socrates, and
many other notable persons, whome
the Diuell himselke coulde not allure
nor withdawe from their simplicitie,
yet neuertheles their wiues made them
both to murmur & to curse. And there-

¶ strength
of a vvo
mā is in hir
tongue.

The dispraise of Women.

Ecclesi. 25. For the sonne of Sirach both counsaile
man, rather to dwell in a wilderness
and solytary place, then with a wicked
wife, and he sayth it is moze better to
dwell with Lyons and Dragons, then
to be conuersant with a wicked woman.
Eccle. 7. For to be short, there is no euil that may
be compared to the malice of a wic-
ked woeman, the whiche as Salomon
sayth, no man can auoid without the spe-
ciall grace of God.

Properceus Properceus sayde, the propertie of
a woman is to conspire and compasse
fraudes and subtilties, and to inuent
craftes and malicious deceites. And to
the same purpose **S. Hierome** Saincte Hierome
writinge to Iovinian sayth, that the
furdye and science of wicked woemen,
are wiles, deceites, treasons, and Magi-
call vanities. For **Liuius** Liuius caused hir hus-
bande to dye, whome she hated ex-
tremely, in mixing poyson with his po-
tage.

And in lyke manner **Lucilla** caused hir
husbande to dye whom she loued out of
measure, for she thinking to giue him a
potion for to increase loue, in steed ther-
off,

off, the gaue him Lacontinum, a deadly
poyson.

That the woman is much more we-
kedder then h man, it is manifest inough
not onely by the examples of hillozies,
but also by dayly experience. Moreouer
we finde not in all the whole Scrip-
ture that our Saniour Iesus Christ did
at any time driue out of mens bodyes
oz his Apostles any more then one Di-
uell at a time, but the Gospell sayth
and witnesseth of a truth, that the saint
our of the worlde did chase and driue
out seauen Diuells out of one woman.
Also according to h vse of the Romaine
Church, soz to baptise a sonne, they pro-
nounce the name of the diuel but twen-
tie times, but whē they baptise a daugh-
ter, they pronounce the name of the Di-
uel thirtie times, soz to coniure him out,
as though it were more vncasie & hard
to driue out from h female kinde, then
from the male.

And Clement Marrot, the French
Poet, hath leste in wziting, that h wic-
ked woman may be lykened to the Di-
uell vnder Saint Michaels feste, bitaue
P.iiij. Saint

vii. diuells
driuen out
of a womā's
body.
Marke the
last chapter

The saying
of Marrot.

The dispraise of Women.

Saint Michael hath the Diuell vnder his feete, and the woman hath the Diuell in hir head.

What be-
comes of
olde Moo-
nes euery
moneth,

A merry fellow being demaunded what God doth with olde Moones, considering how the Moone doth renew euery moneth, he answered that God sent them into Mules heades, or into womens heades, because they are alwaies Moone madde and holde opinion of the Moone, & become Lunaticke, as in another Proverb it is said, that he y^e hath a wife, a shee Goat, and a shee Mule, hath thre vnhappy beastes.

As concerning an euill wife, it may be easely proued by one onely Helena, that caused the destruction and ruine of Troy, and of the Troyans, who retourning into Lacedemonia with Menelaus hir husbände, she passed by the Ilande of Creta or Candia. But when the inhabitants of the sayd Ilande knew of hir comming & arrining thether, they came from al parts by great troupes and companyes for to beholde & see hir of whom so much was spoken off, and for whose sake all the wo:ld almost had felte the
fierce

fierce assaults of warre. The sayd Helena when she began to be olde, and hir face wzinkeled, did vppon a time beholde hir selfe in a glasse, and when shee saw how she was chaüged she began to laugh, in mocking the folly and rash doings of those that by so great obstinacie and selfe will had moued & stirred vp so cruell battayle for a thing so withered and of small durance. Wherefoze by good right Marcus the Emperour sayde, that the fire in Mount Aetna did not so much harme in ail Sicilia, as one wicked woman did within the walls of Rome.

Helena be-
holding his
selfe in a
glasse, dyd
mock them
that had en-
terprised
vvar for so
small an oc-
casion.

In the reigne of which Emperour ther was a great plague and pestilence in Rome, during the which there dyed a great number of people that the Emperour caused to be numbred, where he found that of an hundzeth and for-
f tie foure thousande of women lying well, there dyed foure scoze thousande, and of an hundzeth thousande wicked women there escaped almost all.

The good
vvyues dy-
ed in the
yeare of 5
great plas-
gue y was
in Rome, &
the wicked
women es-
caped.

Of which plague and pestilence the worlde seeleth off vnto this day, for that is it that causeth the want and lacke of

The dispraise of Women.

good women, bicause they dyed almost all during this plague, but the euill & wicked womē escaped in a manner all, who haue so plētifully replenished y^e world, that there is none so eloquent an Orator; whatsoeuer he be, that can sufficiently expresse and declare the malyce of those women that least of all doe offend in the world. And this giueth me occasion to conclude this matter with y^e saying of Marcus Aurelius, who was as wise in the knowledge of Philosophie, as iust in the government of his Empire, the which oftentimes exclaymed and cryed out saying.

The exclamation of
Marcus
Aurelius.

O ye women which are alwayes slow to giue, but greedie to take, when I call to remembraunce how I was bozne of you, I bewayle my lyfe, & thinking how I liue with you, I wish death: for there is no such death as to lyue amongst you, nor no lyfe so happy as to shunne and fly your company.

FINIS.



Imprinted at London by

Thomas East for William

Ponsonby, dwelling in

Pauls Churchyard.

